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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. 1.

LEIPZIG: BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ.

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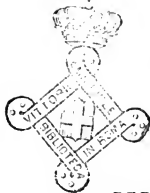
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AUTHOR OF "THE CAXTONS," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1864.

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TO
HEINRICH ERNST.

MY DEAR ERNST,

Accept the Dedication of these Essays. You will recognise, in some of them, subjects on which I have, not unfrequently, conversed with you and the charming critic who so worthily bears your distinguished name.

The friendship I have formed with natures so noble as hers and your own, has added a new charm to my life; and all who have the privilege to know you will comprehend the affectionate pride with which I inscribe to that friendship this grateful memorial.

E. B. L.

KNEBWORTH, *October 1863.*

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ESSAY I.

ON THE INCREASED ATTENTION TO OUTWARD NATURE
IN THE DECLINE OF LIFE.

ON THE INCREASED ATTENTION TO OUTWARD NATURE IN THE DECLINE OF LIFE.

ONE of the most common, yet, when considered, one of the most touching characteristics of receding life, is in its finer perception of external nature. You will find men who, in youth and middle age, seeming scarcely to notice the most striking features of some unfamiliar landscape, become minutely observant of the rural scenery around them when the eye has grown dim and the step feeble. They will detect more quickly than the painter the delicate variations made by the lapse of a single day in the tints of autumnal foliage—they will distinguish, among the reeds by the river-side, murmurs that escape the dreamy ear of the poet.

I was acquainted in my schoolboy days with an old man, who, after a metropolitan career of noisy and brilliant success, had slipped away from the London world as from a vulgar mob, and found a Tusculum the reverse of Cicero's, void of books and remote from philosophers, in a dull lone house in a dull flat country. To me no scenery could be less interesting than that amidst which I met him in his quiet rambles: a trite monotony of level downs — neither wood, nor brook, nor undulating hill-top that enlivens solitude with the

infinite play of shadows. I was then at the age when we all fancy ourselves poets, and this man, who had but slight esteem for poets, was yet the first in whom I found that close observation of natural objects from which poetry takes the same starting-point as science. He would pause by what seemed to me a barren heap of stones, to examine the wild flower that had forced its way through the crevices; he would point with his stick to what seemed to me but the empty space, till, looking long and steadily, I too saw the gossamer, sailing slow over the niggard stubbles; — and his countenance literally brightened with genial interest whenever we chanced to encounter some adventurous ant carrying its burden of a millet-seed over the Alpine fissures of a yawning cart-rut. I was bound to respect this man, for I was a boy and ambitious, he was old and renowned. He was kind to me, for he had known one of my family in a former generation, and would suffer me to walk by his side, and encourage me by indulgent, possibly contemptuous silence, to pour forth my crude fancies and my vague aspirations, — He, who could have taught me so much, content to listen; I, who could have taught him nothing, well pleased to talk. And so, one day when he had more than usually provoked my resentment by devoting to gossamers and ants the admiring interest I was urging him to bestow upon bards and heroes, I exclaimed, with abrupt candour — “If ever I win a tenth part of your fame, sir, I don’t think I shall run away from it into the country, especially into a country in which one has nothing to look at except ants and gossamers!”

The old man stopped short, and, leaning on his stick, first stared at me, and then, musingly, into

space. Perhaps my rude speech set him thinking. At last he said, very quietly, and as if more to himself than me, "I shall soon leave the world: men and women I may hope again to see elsewhere, but shall I see elsewhere corn-fields and grass, gossamers and ants?" Again he paused a moment or two, and then added, "As we lose hold of our five senses do we wake up a sixth which had before been dormant — the sense of Nature; or have we certain instincts akin to Nature which are suppressed and overlaid by our reason, and revive only at the age when our reason begins to fail us?"

I think I quote his words with accuracy — certainly their sense; for they puzzled me so much at the time that I often thought over them. And many years afterwards they came back to me in full force when reading the very remarkable conjectures upon instinct that are scattered throughout the works of Sir Humphry Davy; in which that most imaginative of all our men of science suggests, in opposition to the various theories founded upon Locke, that man has instincts, of which revelation is one, and "that many of those powers which have been called instinctive belong to the more refined clothing of the spirit."* Be this as it may, I doubt not that each of my readers will recall some instance analogous to that which I have cited, of the charm which Nature gradually acquires as our steps near the grave which is the vanishing point of her landscape. Year by year, I find that same charm gaining sway over myself. There was one period of my life when I considered every hour spent out of capitals as time wasted — when, with exhilarated spirits, I would return from truant loiterings

* Sir H. Davy's Works, vol. ix. p. 343, 'The Proteus, or Immortality.'

under summer trees to the smoke and din of London thoroughfares: I loved to hear the ring of my own tread on the hard pavement. The desire to compete and to combat — the thirst for excitements opening one upon the other in the upward march of an opposed career — the study of man in his thickest haunts — the heart's warm share in the passions which the mind, clear from their inebriety, paused to analyse, — these gave to me, as they give to most active men in the unflagging energies of youth, a delight in the vista of gas-lamps, and the hubbub of the great mart for the interchange of ideas. But now — I love the country as I did when a little child, before I had admitted into my heart that ambition which is the first fierce lesson we learn at school. Is it, partly, that those trees never remind us that we are growing old? Older than we are, their hollow stems are covered with rejoicing leaves. The birds build amid their bowering branches rather than in the lighter shade of the sapling. Nature has no voice that wounds the self-love; her coldest wind nips no credulous affection. She alone has the same face in our age as in our youth. The friend with whom we once took sweet counsel we have left in the crowd, a stranger — perhaps a foe! The woman in whose eyes, some twenty years ago, a paradise seemed to open in the midst of a fallen world, we passed the other day with a frigid bow. She wore rouge and false hair. But those wild flowers under the hedgerow — those sparkles in the happy waters — no friendship has gone from them! — their beauty has no simulated freshness — their smile has no fraudulent deceit.

But there is a deeper truth than all this, in the influence which Nature gains over us in proportion as

life withdraws itself from struggle and contention. We are placed on earth for a certain period to fulfil, according to our several conditions and degrees of mind, those duties by which the earth's history is carried on. Desk and warehouse, factory and till, forum and senate, schools of science and art, arms and letters — by these we beautify and enrich our common habitation; by these we defend, bind together, exalt, the destinies of our common race. And during this period the mind is wisely fitted less to contemplate than to act — less to repose than to toil. The great stream of worldly life needs attrition along its banks in order to maintain the law that regulates the movement of its waves. But when that period of action approaches towards its close, the soul, for which is decreed an existence beyond the uses of earth — an existence aloof from desk and warehouse, factory and till, forum and senate, schools of science and art, arms and letters — gradually relaxes its hold of former objects, and, insensibly perhaps to itself, is attracted nearer towards the divine source of all being, in the increasing witchery by which Nature, distinct from Man, reminds it of its independence of the crowd from which it begins to re-emerge.

And, in connection with this spiritual process, it is noticeable how intuitively in age we go back with strange fondness to all that is fresh in the earliest dawn of youth. If we never cared for little children before, we delight to see them roll in the grass over which we hobble on crutches. The grandsire turns wearily from his middle-aged care-worn son to listen with infant laugh to the prattle of an infant grand-child. It is the old who plant young trees; it is the old who are most

saddened by the autumn and feel most delight in the returning spring.

And, in the exquisite delicacy with which hints of the invisible eternal future are conveyed to us, may not that instinctive sympathy, with which life in age rounds its completing circle towards the point at which it touches the circle of life in childhood, be a benign intimation that

"Death is nought

But the soul's birth — and so we should it call?" *

And may there be no meaning more profound than the obvious interpretation, in the sacred words, "Make yourselves as little children, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?"

* 'On the Original, Nature, and Immortality of the Soul.' — Sir John Davies.

ESSAY II.

ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE URBAN AND
RURAL TEMPERAMENT.

ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE URBAN AND RURAL TEMPERAMENT.

I HAVE noticed in the previous essay, that increased fondness for rural nature which is among the ordinary characteristics of advancing age, as increase of stillness is among the ordinary attributes of deepening eve. But there are persons who, from first to last, are such special lovers of the country life that they never feel thoroughly at home in the stony labyrinth of capitals; and there are others who, from first to last, would rather look out on a back-yard in St. James's than on the vales under Fiesolè in the hues of a Tuscan autumn, or the waters of Windermere in the hush of an English June.

We, who are lovers of the country, are not unnaturally disposed to consider that our preference argues some finer poetry of sentiment — some steadier devotion to those ennobling studies which sages commend as the fitting occupations of retirement. But the facts do not justify that self-conceit upon our part. It was said by a philosopher who was charged with all the cares of a world's empire, that "there is no such great matter in retirement. A man may be wise and sedate in a crowd as well as in a desert, and keep the noise of the world from getting within him. In this case, as Plato observes, the walls of a town and the enclosure of a

sheepfold may be made the same thing."* Certainly poets, and true poets, have lived by choice in the dingy streets of great towns. Men of science, engaged in reasonings the most abstruse, on subjects the most elevating, have usually fixed their dwelling-place in bustling capitals, as if the din of the streets without deepened, by the force of contrast, the quiet of those solitary closets, wherein they sat analysing the secret heart of that Nature, whose everyday outward charms they abandoned to commonplace adorers.

On the other hand, men perforce engaged in urban occupations, neither bards nor sages, but city clerks and traders, feel a yearning of the heart towards a home in the country; loving rural Nature with so pure a fervour that, if closer intercourse be forbidden, they are contented to go miles every evening to kiss the skirt of her robe. Their first object is to live out of London, if but in a suburb; to refresh their eyes with the green of a field; to greet the first harbinger of spring in the primrose venturing forth in their own tiny realm of garden. It is for them, as a class, that cities extend beyond their ancient bounds; while our nobles yet clung to their gloomy halls in the Flete, traders sought homesteads remote from their stalls and wares in the pleasing village of Charing; gradually nobles were allured by the gentle example, and proud villas, with gardens sloping down to the river-side, chased the wood-lark, or rather the bittern, away from the Strand.**

* Marcus Antonius: Jeremy Collier's translation.

** "The trade," says a writer in 1661 (Graunt — 'Observations on Bills of Mortality'), "and very city of London removes westward." I think it is perfectly clear, from the various documents extant, that the movement

Nothing more stamps the true Cockney than his hate for the sound of Bow bells. It is in vain that we squirearchs affect to sneer at the rural tastes of the cit in his rood of ground by the highroad to Hampstead: the aquarium stored with minnows and tittlebats; the rock-work of vitrified clinkers, rich with ferns borne from Wales and the Highlands. His taste is not without knowledge. He may tell us secrets in horticulture that would startle our Scotch gardener; and if ever he be rich and bold enough to have a farm, the chances are that he will teach more than he learns from the knowing ones who bet five to one on his ruin. And when these fameless students of Nature ramble forth from the suburb, and get for a while to the real heart of the country — when, on rare summer holidays, they recline, in *remoto gramine*, — they need no choice Falernian, no unguents and brief-lived roses for that interval of full beatitude which the poet invites his friend to snatch from reprieving fates. Their delight proves the truth of my favourite aphorism — “that our happiest moments are those of which the memories are the most innocent.”

It is not only the middle class of citizen in which beyond the city into the suburbs commenced with the smaller shopkeepers, and not with the nobles: first, because the Reports recommending improvements always mention the ground as preoccupied by small tenements; and, secondly, because the royal proclamations, and indeed the enactments of Parliament, in the sixteenth century, against the erection of new buildings within London and Westminster, were evidently directed against the middle or lower classes, and not against the nobles. In the reign of Elizabeth, the Queen's wish would have sufficed for her nobles: and proclamations can restrain the few when they are impotent against the many. But the enactments show, still more positively, that the interdict was intended for the people. No dwelling-houses were to be subdivided into small tenements; all sheds and shops erected within seven years were to be pulled down.

the love of rural life is strong. Mechanics and artisans, crowded and pent in towns, have the same luxuriant joy in the sights and sounds of the country.

Turn your horse's head some summer holiday towards the bosky dells of Epping Forest. Suddenly you will come upon a spot in which the genius of our old English poets seems to linger — a fragment of the old "good greenwood," in which "birds are about and singing."

Scattered amidst those venerable trees, stunted as trees are on old forest-ground, but with gnarled fantastic trunks, and opening here and there into glades that might ravish a painter's eye, are seen, no longer indeed dainty dame and highborn cavalier but, weavers from Spitalfields — the carts and wains that brought them drawn up by the roadside. Here a family group gathered round the cups "that cheer but not inebriate;" there, children, whom it gladdens the heart to see at play, for the children of weavers have but a short interval of play between the cradle and the loom; yonder, heeding you not as you ride slowly by, two young sweethearts, talking, perhaps, of some distant time when they may see green fields, even on work-days, from the casements, not of a London attic but, of some thatched cottage, with eaves in which the swallow builds secure; farther on, some studious lad, lonely as Jaques,

"Under the shade of melancholy boughs."

He has brought a book with him, doubtless a poem or work of fiction, that suits with the landscape round, and opens a door in the grassy knolls, like that which, in Scottish legend, admitted the child of earth into the

halls of fairyland; yet ever and anon the reader lifts his eyes from the page, and drinks in, with a lengthened gaze, the balm of the blue sky, the freshness of the sylvan leaves.

The mechanics of Manchester are, or were some years ago, notable entomologists. They might be seen on summer evenings issuing forth with their butterfly-nets from smoky lanes, allured, by gossamer wings, over level swards dominated by tall factory-chimneys, as near to their homes and as far from their thoughts as the battle-field of Thermopylæ was from the dwellers in Tempe.

Doubtless, in the pursuit which gives zest and object to these rambles, they obey that instinct of the chase which is one of the primitive ties between man and nature. The passion for field-sports, which is so common amongst the higher classes in England, lies, I think, deep amidst finer and gentler propensities than those which find pleasure in destroying. I put aside the more factitious adjuncts to the charm of the hunting-field: the gossip of the meet, the emulation of the run, the stimulants to the love of applause in the hot competition of rival courage and address. Apart from these exhilarants — which have nothing to do with the love of Nature; by which men might be equally stirred in a tennis-court, or, with higher mental exertion, on the floor of the House of Commons — there is a delight in this frank and hearty commune with rural Nature herself, which unconsciously warms the hunter's heart, and constitutes the most genial portion of his wild enjoyment. His pursuit carried on through seasons in which Nature has the least beauty for those who, like Horace, regard winter as deformed, — he

welcomes with quickening pulse the aspects that sadden the lovers of flowers and sunshine. That slushing thaw, that melancholy drizzle, through which I, no follower of Nimrod, gaze listless and dejected from misty windows on skeleton trees and desolated parterres, raise the spirits and gladden the sense of the hunter. He has the privilege of finding beauties in the most sullen expression which the countenance of Nature can assume; and he is right, and he is rewarded. How cheerily the tongue of the hounds rings through those dripping covers! With what a burst of life that copse of evergreens comes out from the nude hedgerows at the wind of the hazy lane! How playfully that noisy brook, through which the rider will splash his jocund way, re-escapes in its glee from the ice whose bonds it has broken! And when all is over, and the hunter rides homeward, perhaps alone, the westering sun breaks out from the clouds, just to bid him good-night and disappear; or over his own rooftops gleams the moon or the wintry star, on which he gazes with a dim, half-conscious.

"Devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow."

He has been that day with Nature, and the exhilaration of his exercise has lifted up his spirits to enjoy her companionship; inwardly, perhaps mechanically, as we enjoy that of any familiar friend, without pausing to expatiate on the charms of friendship.

But here let the hunter speak for himself, and in words that eloquently approve my attempt to analyse his sensations. "It is by the real sportsman — by the true admirer of nature and nature's God — by the man fraught with a lively sense of the boon of existence, of

thankfulness for the health and happiness he is permitted to enjoy — by the man at peace with himself, and in charity with all men, that the exhilarating sensations of a hunting morning will be felt and appreciated.* The piety which pervades this extract is in harmony with the spirit in which the ancients appear to have regarded the pleasures of the chase. Arrian opens his *Cynegeticus*, or 'Treatise on Coursing,' by reminding us how carefully "Xenophon has commemorated the advantages that accrue to mankind from hunting, and the regard of the gods for those instructed in it by Chiron." And indeed Xenophon was scrupulously rigid in preserving that mythical alliance between religion and hunting — forbidding the sportsman even to slip a hound until he has vowed a due share of the game to Apollo and Diana. So that even in the heathen times the chase brought man too closely face to face with Nature not to suggest to him a recognition of that Celestial Soul which lights the smile upon her lips. Certainly in the chase itself all my sympathies are on the side of the fox; perhaps from a foolish inclination, which has done me little good in the world, towards the weaker party; leading me imprudently to favour those whom there is a strong determination to run down. But if all individuals are to give way to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, we must set off against the painful fate of the fox the pleasurable sensation in the breasts of numbers, which his fate has the honourable privilege to excite, and be contented to sacrifice his personal welfare, as we sacrifice some "vested interest," to that pitiless Moloch "the Public Advantage."

* 'The Noble Science,' by Frederic Delmé Radcliffe, Esq.

For myself, though no participator in the joys of more vehement sport, I have a pleasure that I cannot reconcile to my abstract notions of the tenderness due to dumb creatures, in the tranquil cruelty of angling. I can only palliate the wanton destructiveness of my amusement by trying to assure myself that my pleasure does not spring from the success of the treachery I practise towards a poor little fish, but rather from that innocent revelry in the luxuriance of summer life which only anglers enjoy to the utmost. When I have cast my perfidious line over the waves of a lake, or into the dips and hollows of a babbling trout-stream, with all its romantic curvatures into creek and cove, a thousand images, born from poetic sentiment, and giving birth in turn to moralising thought, present themselves to my noonday reverie; images which would never have taken shape had I been pacing to and fro the gravel-walks of my garden. Above all, Nature herself, in that spiritual beauty which keeps opening out from the green deeps as our eye rests on the surface, just as out from some grand author meaning on meaning, secret on secret, will open as we continue to read and re-read the page — Nature herself fascinates and appeals to me when I stand on the grassy banks, and see earth and sky blending light and shadow in the glass of mysterious waters.

This miserable pastime of angling — this base seduction of a credulous fellow-creature with a fraudulent bait — certainly it is not this which charms me hour after hour to solitary moss-grown banks. The pastime is but my excuse for listening so patiently

"From morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve,"

to the vague whisperings of the Universal Mother. Why do I need that idle rod to draw me forth to the water-side — why, if no snare of mine near yon water-lily menaced the scaly flocks of Proteus — why could I not recline as long and as contentedly under this bowery elm-tree, watching the reeds quiver where the pike stirs, or noting the wistful eyes of the grasshopper as he halts on my lap, wondering whether I be friend or foe? I know not why. Ask the gunner whether he would walk thirty miles a-day over stubble and turnips, if he had a staff in his hand instead of his Manton.

Man is so formed for design by the Great Designer, that in his veriest amusement he still involuntarily seeks an object. He needs a something definite — a something that pretends to be practical — in order to rivet his attention long to external Nature, however sensitive he may be to her charms. We must have our chase or our angling, our butterfly-net or our geological hammer, or we must be botanists or florists, naturalists, husbandmen, or artists. If we can make to ourselves no occupation out of the many that rural nature affords us, we must be contented, like the Spital-fields weaver, to visit her on rare holidays. Our week-day world is not in her calm retreats.

He who fondly prefers the country to the town, who feels that the best part of him can never develop into bloom and fruit in the atmosphere of capitals, is not, as I commenced by owning, wiser or better, more imaginative or more thoughtful, than he who by choice fixes his home in the busiest haunts of men. But he is probably better and possibly wiser than the *average* number of those who cannot live out of towns. He must possess, if Kant's theory of the *Æsthetic* be as

true as it is lovely, the inborn moral sentiment which allies itself to the immediate, unreasoning, unambitious sympathy with Nature. "He," says the grand philosopher, "who contemplates solitarily (without purpose or object of communicating to others what it pleases himself to observe) the beauty of a wild flower, a bird, an insect — to admire and to love it — who would regret not to find that thing in Nature, independently of all advantage he may draw from it — nay, even if it occasions to him some loss or harm; — it is he who attaches to Nature an interest immediate and intellectual. . . . That advantage which Natural beauty has over Artistic beauty in alone thus exciting an immediate interest, accords with the purified and solid intelligence of all who have cultivated their moral sentiment. When a man, having sufficient taste to appreciate the productions of the Fine Arts with exactitude and delicate perception, quits without regret the chamber in which glitter those beauties that satisfy vanity and the craving for social distractions, and seeks the beauty of Nature, to find therein a delight that sustains his mind in the direction by which we can never attain the final goal: in that man we suppose a certain beauty of soul which we do not attribute to a connoisseur, because the last finds an interest in the objects of Art."

Leaving without comment these passages, which do but loosely and inadequately paraphrase the original (for it would almost require a Plato to translate, and, alas! at times, an Aristotle to comprehend, a Kant), I may suggest some less refining arguments in favour of the proposition that he who prefers the country is perhaps better than the average of those who prefer the

town. It is clear that he must have a large share of that negative goodness which consists in the absence of evil. He cannot well be a profligate sensualist, nor an ambitious schemer, nor dependent for enjoyment on the gratification of petty vanities. His sources of pleasure will, at least, be generally pure. He will have that independence of spirit which can stand firm without leaning on other men's minds: to use the fine expression of Locke, "he will have raised himself above the alms-basket, and is not content to live lazily on scraps of begged opinion."* His conscience needs no turbulent excitements to chase away a haunting remembrance. I speak of those who genuinely and truly love the country by natural temperament, not of those who take to it without love, as outlaws who fly into a temple, not to worship at its altar, but to lie hid within its sanctuary. Birds sing in vain to the ear, flowers bloom in vain to the eye, of mortified vanity and galled ambition. He who would know repose in retirement must carry into retirement his destiny, integral and serene, as the Cæsars transported the statue of Fortune into the chamber they chose for their sleep. The picture of the first Lord Holland gnawing out his fierce heart on the downs of Kingsgate, is very different from that of a gentler statesman, Pliny, hailing his reprieve from pomp and power, and exclaiming, in the scholar's true enthusiasm — "O mare, O littus, verum secretumque *Μουσειον*, quam multa dictatis, quam multa invenitis!"

Whatever the varying predilections of grown-up men for town or country, one fact needs no proving;

* Introduction to 'Essay on the Human Understanding.'



all children prefer the country. Ask any schoolboy up to the age of fifteen, where he would spend his holidays. Not one in five hundred will say, "In the streets of London," if you give him the option of green fields and running waters. It is, then, a fair presumption that there must be something of the child still in the character of the men or the women whom the country charms in maturer as in dawning life.

Among women especially, I own I think better of those who prefer fields to streets. They have not in capitals the grand occupations of laborious men — they have no bar and no senate. At the best, if more than usually cultured and intelligent, they can but interchange such small coins of thought and learning as are spent in talk. But if there be one thing in which intellect can appear to the intellectual either flippant or commonplace, it is the talk of wits in the drawing-rooms of capitals. The worst part of an eminent man's conversation is, nine times out of ten, to be found in that part which he means to be clever. Even in the talk of Dr. Johnson, as recorded by Boswell, the finest things are those which he said to Boswell when nobody was by, and which he could just as well have said in the Hebrides.

The most delicate beauty in the mind of women is, and ever must be, an independence of artificial stimulants for content. It is not so with men. The links that bind men to capitals belong to the golden chain of civilisation — the chain which fastens all our destinies to the throne of Jove. And hence the larger proportion of men in whom genius is pre-eminent have preferred to live in cities, though some of them have bequeathed to us the loveliest pictures of the rural

scenes in which they declined to dwell. Certainly nothing in Milton or in Shakespeare more haunts our memory than the passages in which they seem to luxuriate in rural life, as Arcadians in the Golden Age. What voluptuous revelry amongst green leaves in that half-pastoral comedy which has its scene in the Forest of Arden! In the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' how Fancy seems to bury herself, as it were, in the lap of Nature, as the fairies bury themselves in the bells of flowers! Think of Milton, the 'Lycidas,' the 'Comus,' 'L'Allegro,' 'Il Penseroso,' the garden-land of 'Paradise Lost!' Yet Milton seems to have willingly enough spent nearly all his life in "troublous cities pent." Even in his brief holiday abroad it is amongst capitals that he loves to linger. We do not find him, like the poet who has had the widest and loudest fame of our own age, rejoice

"To sit alone, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's fading green,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot has ne'er or rarely been."

Shakespeare, so far as we know of his life, was from early youth a denizen of London till rich enough to retire; and then he retired, not into the solitudes of the country, but into a social dwelling in the midst of a town, in which, no doubt, he found, and was pleased to find, associates of younger days, with whom he could talk frankly, as great men rarely talk save to those with whom they have played in boyhood.

Most of the more famous modern writers on the Continent have by choice lived in cities — especially the German and the French. And in this they are distinguished from the ancient authors, at least the

Latin. Horace had his Sabine farm in the Vale of Ustica; the love of scenery yet more attractive made him take also his cottage amidst the orchards and "mobile rivulets" of Tivoli. He sighed yet for a third country home — a winter retreat in the mild climate of Sorrento. Tibullus, the amorous and the beautiful, passed the larger part of his short life on his estate in the lovely country between Tivoli and Præneste. Ovid, specially the man of gaiety and fashion, lived, it is true, chiefly at Rome (before his mysterious exile), but he had a garden of his own apart from his house, between the Flaminian and Clodian Ways, to which he constantly resorted, as well as his country-seat, the Pelignan farm.

Virgil's house at Rome, like that of Propertius, was ruralised, as it were, by its neighbourhood to the vast gardens of Mæcenæ. His favourite residence, however, was at Naples, not actually in the town, if Neapolitan traditions be worthy of credit, but on the outskirts, near his legendary tomb on Posilippo, and facing the bay which sunset colours with such glorious hues.

Even Terence, whose vocation of comic writer might be supposed to fix him amidst the most populous haunts of men, may be fairly presumed, when not in the villas of his patrons, to have spent his time chiefly on his own small estate by the Appian Road, till he vanished into Greece, whence he never returned; dying, according to one report — for there are many reports as to the mode and place of his death — amid the mountain seclusions of Arcady. Every scholar, almost every schoolboy, has got by heart the song in which Catullus vents his rapture on regaining his

home on the Sirmian Peninsula. And many a man who has never read Catullus has uttered the same cry of joy in greeting his rural threshold after strange wanderings or lengthened absence. For "what more blessed than to ungird us of our cares — when the mind lays down its fardel, and we come from the toil afar to our own hearth, and repose on the longed-for bed?" Who does not then call on the dear roof to welcome him as if it were a living thing, and echo the sense of that wondrous line —

"Laugh, every dimple in the cheek of home!" *

Cicero's love of the country needs no proof. With his busy life we still associate his quiet Tusculum. Pliny the younger gives us a description, chiefly known to architectural critics, whom it has sadly puzzled, of a rich public man's retreat from the smoke of Rome, only seventeen miles from the city, "so that" (writes Pliny to his friend) "after we have finished the business of the day, we can go thither from town at sunset;" a journey which he calls extremely short when performed on horseback (more tedious in a carriage, because the roads were sandy). Certainly a man must have loved the country well to ride seventeen miles to a house in it after the business of the day. Few English statesmen or lawyers, I suspect, would be equally alert in their sacrifice to the rural deities. But how lovingly Pliny describes the house, with apartments so built as to command the finest

* "Ridete quidquid est Domi cachinnorum."

The translation of the line in the text is by Leigh Hunt. I am not quite satisfied with the version, but I have not met with, and certainly I cannot suggest, a better one.

prospects: the terrace before the gallery all perfumed with violets; the gallery itself so placed that the shadow of the building is thrown on the terrace in the forenoon; and at the end of the gallery "the little garden apartment," which he calls his own — his sweetheart — looking on one side to the terrace, on the other to the sea; and then his own bedchamber carefully constructed for the exclusion of noise. No voice of babbling servants, no murmurs from booming seas, reach the room in which, as he tells us elsewhere, he not only sleeps but muses.

"There," he exclaims, in that charming letter* wherein he compares that petty gossip of the town, which seems, while you are in town, to be so sensible and rational, but of which you say when you get into the country, "How many days have I wasted on trifles!" — "there," he exclaims, "there, at my Laurentium, I hear nothing that I repent to have heard, say nothing that I repent to have said; no hopes delude, and no fears molest me. Welcome, thou life of integrity and virtue! *O dulce otium, honestumque, ac pæne omni negotio pulchrius!*"

We have no absolute warrant for fixing the voluntary choice of the great poets of Athens either in town or country. But we know, from ample authority, that the possession of a rural home was the passionate craving of an Athenian. Up to the date of the Peloponnesian War most of the Athenian citizens resided habitually with their families in the country. And when compelled, at the outbreak of that war, to come within the blind walls of the city, each man grieved,

* Book I. Epist. IX. to Minutius Fundanius.

as if in leaving his rural home he was leaving his own civil polity, yea, his own proper city, behind him.*

The burly Demos itself is represented by Aristophanes much as our old-fashioned caricatures represented John Bull — a shrewd and grumbling farmer thinking how votes might affect his crops. It may not, therefore, be presumptuous to suppose that Sophocles had a favourite retreat on the chalky soil of his native Colonus, and listened, many a returning spring, to "the nightingales that tenanted the dark ivy, and greeted the narcissus, ancient coronal of mighty goddesses, as it burst into bloom under the dews of heaven."** Or that the wronged and melancholy Euripides might have gathered his consoling books (Athenæus tells us that he was an ardent book-collector) into some suburban dwelling-place by the banks of that Cephissus, of which, in the headlong rush of his darkest tragedy, he pauses to chant the tempering breeze and the fragrant rose.***

The town temperament is in general anxious, aspiring, combative; the rural temperament quiet, unambitious, peaceful.

But the town temperament has this advantage over the rural — a man may by choice fix his home in cities, yet have the most lively enjoyment of the country when he visits it for recreation; while the man who, by choice, settles habitually in the country, there deposits his household gods, and there moulds his habits of thought to suit the life he has selected, usually feels

* Thucyd., lib. i. c. xvi. See Bloomfield's note on the passage referred to.

** *Œdip. Col.*, from line 668.

*** *'Medea,'* 842.

an actual distress, an embarrassment, a pain, when, from time to time, he drops, a forlorn stranger, on the London pavement. He cannot readily brace his mind to the quick exertions for small objects that compose the activity of the Londoner. He has no interest in the gossip about persons he does not know; the very weather does not affect him as it does the man who has no crops to care for. When the Londoner says, "What a fine day!" he shakes his head dolefully, and mutters, "Sadly in want of rain."

The London sparrows, no doubt, if you took them into the forest glens of Hampshire, would enjoy the change very much; but drop the thrush and linnet of Hampshire into St. James's Square, and they would feel very uneasy at the prospect before them. You might fill all the balconies round with prettier plants than thrush and linnet ever saw in the New Forest, but they would not be thrush and linnet if they built their nest in such coverts.

ESSAY III.

ON MONOTONY IN OCCUPATION AS A SOURCE OF
HAPPINESS.

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FOR things to be distinctly remembered, it is not enough that they should delight the senses and captivate the fancy. They must have a certain measured duration, in harmony with the previous impressions on the mind. Thus the airs of the *Æolian harp*, ravishing though they are, cannot be committed to memory, because no time is observed in their music.

When we look back over a lengthened series of years, we seldom find that remembrance clings fondly to moments in which the mind has been the most agitated, the passions most active, but rather to the intervals in which hour stole on hour with the same quiet tread. The transitory fever of the senses it is only a diseased imagination that ponders over and recalls; the triumphs which flatter our self-esteem look pale and obsolete from the distance of years, as arches of lath and plaster, thrown up in haste for the march of a conqueror, seem frail and tawdry when we see them, in after time, spanning the solid thoroughfares with columns already mouldering, and stripped of the banners and the garlands that had clad them in the bravery of an hour.

Howsoever varied the courses of our life, whatsoever the phases of pleasure and ambition through which it has swept along, still, when in memory we would revive the times that were comparatively the happiest, those times will be found to have been the calmest.

As the body for health needs regularity in habits, and will even reconcile itself to habits not in themselves best fitted for longevity, with less injury to the system than might result from abrupt changes to the training by which athletes attain their vigour — so the mind for health needs a certain clockwork of routine; we like to look forward with a tranquil sentiment of security; when we pause from the occupation of to-day, which custom has made dear to us, there is a charm in the mechanical confidence with which we think that the same occupation will be renewed at the same hour to-morrow. And thus monotony itself is a cause and element of happiness which, amidst the shifting tumults of the world, we are apt to ignore. Plutarch, indeed, says truly* that "the shoe takes the form of the foot, not the foot the form of the shoe," meaning thereby that "man's life is moulded by the disposition of his soul." But new shoes chafe the foot, new customs the soul. The stoutest pedestrian would flag on a long walk if he put on new shoes at every second mile.

It is with a sentiment of misplaced pity, perhaps of contempt still more irrational, that the busy man, whose existence is loud and noisy, views another who seems to him less to live than to vegetate. The traveller, whirled from capital to capital, stops for a night's

* Plutarch, 'On the Tranquillity of the Soul.'

lodging at some convent rising lone amidst unfrequented hills. He witnesses the discipline of the monastic life drilled into unvarying forms, day and year portioned out, according to inch scale, by the chimes of the undeviating bell. He re-enters his carriage with a sense of relief; how dreary must be the existence he leaves behind! Why dreary? Because so monotonous. Shallow reasoner! it is the monotony that has reconciled the monk to his cell. Even prisoners, after long years, have grown attached to the sameness of their prison, and have shrunk back from the novelty of freedom when turned loose upon the world. Not that these illustrations constitute a plea for monastery or prison; they but serve to show that monotony, even under circumstances least favourable to the usual elements of happiness, becomes a happiness in itself, growing, as it were, unseen, out of the undisturbed certainty of peculiar customs. As the pleasure the ear finds in rhyme is said to arise from its recurrence at measured periods—from the gratified expectation that at certain intervals certain effects will be repeated—so it is in life: the recurrence of things same or similar, the content in the fulfilment of expectations so familiar and so gentle that we are scarcely conscious that they were formed, have a harmony and a charm, and, where life is enriched by no loftier genius, often make the only difference between its poetry and its prose.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE NORMAL CLAIRVOYANCE OF THE
IMAGINATION.

ON THE NORMAL CLAIRVOYANCE OF THE IMAGINATION.

Most men are sceptical as to the wonders recorded of mesmeric clairvoyance. "I concede," says the cautious physiologist, "that you may produce a kind of catalepsy upon a highly nervous subject; that in that state of quasi-catalepsy there may pass through the brain a dream, which the dreamer is able to repeat, and which, in repeating, he may colour or exaggerate according to an unconscious sympathy (called *rapport* by the mesmerists) with the will of the person who has cast him into sleep, or according to a bias of his own mind, of which at the moment he may not be aware. But to conceive that a person in this abnormal state can penetrate into the most secret thoughts of another — traverse, in spirit, the region of time and space — describe to me in London what is being done by my son in Bombay — 'see,' says Sir Henry Holland, 'through other organs than the eyes,' and be wise through other faculties than the reason, — is to contradict all we know of the organisation of man, and of the agencies established by nature."

But it seems to me that there is a clairvoyance much more marvellous than that which the followers

of Puysegur* attribute to the mesmeric trance, but which, nevertheless, no physiologist ever presumes to gainsay. For the most ardent believer in the gift of mesmeric clairvoyance, if his belief be grounded upon actual experience, will be the first to admit that the powers it bestows are extremely capricious and uncertain — that although a somnambulist tells you accurately to-day the cause of an intricate disease or the movements of your son in Bombay, he may not be able to-morrow to detect a cold in your head or tell you what is done by your next-door neighbour. So uncertain, indeed, so unreliable, are the higher phenomena ascribed to mesmeric clairvoyance, that experiments of such phenomena almost invariably fail when subjected to those tests which the incredulous not unreasonably demand. And even when fostered by the submissive faith of witnesses the most reverential, and developed by *rapport* the most sympathetic, the experienced mesmeriser is aware that he must be exceedingly cautious how he attempt to extract any practical uses from the advice or predictions dictated by this mystical second-sight; the more wonderful its occasional accuracy, the more he is on his guard against the grave dangers into which he would be decoyed did he believe that such accuracy could be faithfully reproduced at will, and so led on to exchange for irresponsible oracles the conclusions to be drawn from his own sober sense.

* The theory of Clairvoyance does not originate in Mesmer, but in the experiments of his disciple, Count Puysegur. I am not sure that Mesmer ever acknowledged the existence of clairvoyance to the extent claimed for its manifestations by Puysegur. He certainly did not attach the same importance to its phenomena. Though I have made use of the phrase *Mesmeric* clairvoyance, it is not therefore strictly correct. It ought

It is recorded, upon evidence so respectable that I will assume it to be sufficient, that a clairvoyant has tracked to detection a murder which had baffled the keenest research of the police; that another clairvoyant, a day before the Derby, minutely described the incidents of the race, and truthfully predicted the winner, the colours of the rider, the name of the horse. But sure I am that no mesmeriser who has had practical experience of the most remarkable somnambules in Europe, would venture to risk his own repute in denouncing as criminals those whom the same clairvoyant who had once tracked a murder might circumstantially indicate and unhesitatingly accuse when next applied to in aid of justice, or would hazard his own money on the horse which the same clairvoyant, whose vaticinations on the Derby were once so mysteriously truthful, might, when again invoked, single out as the winner.

No man has sacrificed more for the cause of mesmerism than Dr. Elliotson, and perhaps no man would more earnestly warn a neophyte — startled by his first glimpse of phenomena, which, developed to the utmost by the priesthood of Delphi, once awed to subjection the luminous intellect of Greece — not to accept the lucky guesses of the Pythian for the infallible response of Apollo.

It is not only, then, the extreme rarity of mesmeric clairvoyance approaching in any degree to that finer

rather to be *Pyssegurian* clairvoyance. But I agree with Malebranche, that where we desire to be understood we should use words that correspond with previous associations. And especially in essays of so familiar a character as these, it would be mere pedantry to coin new words for the expression of established ideas.

vision of which the advocates for its existence contend as a fact not the less certain because it is admitted to be rare — but it is far more the fickleness and uncertainty to which that vision itself is subjected, even in the most gifted clairvoyant whom the most accomplished mesmeriser can discover, which has made the phenomena of clairvoyance available to no definite purposes of knowledge.

How little has mesmeric clairvoyance realised the hopes that were based on the early experiments of Puysegur! With all its assumptions of intelligence more than mortal, it has not solved one doubtful problem in science. It professes to range creation on the wings of a spirit, but it can no more explain to us what is "spirit," than it can tell us what is heat or electricity. It assumes to diagnosticate in cases that have baffled the Fergusons and Brodies — it cannot tell us the cause of an epidemic. It has a cure for all diseases — it has not added to the pharmacopœia a single new remedy. It can read the thoughts hoarded close in your heart, the letter buttoned-up in your pocket, — and when it has done so, *cui bono!* you start, you are astonished, you cry "Miraculous!" but the miracle makes you no wiser than if you had seen the trick of a conjuror.

There is another specialty in the restricted domain of clairvoyance: it is inferior to all systematic art and science in this — it does not improve by practice. A clairvoyant may exercise his gifts every day in the year for twenty years, and is no better at the end of the twentieth year than he was at the commencement of the first. Nay, on the contrary, many connoisseurs in mesmerism prefer as the most truthful the youngest

and rawest Pythoness they can obtain, and are inclined to view with distrust all sibyls in lengthened professional practice. But when we deny, as a thing too preternatural, too transcendent for human attainment, this very limited and very precarious, unimprovable, unprofitable specialty of certain morbid constitutions, does it never strike us that there is something much more marvellous in that normal clairvoyance which imagination bestows upon healthful brains?

It is no rare phenomenon for a poet "to see through other organs than his eyes;" to describe with an accuracy that astounds a native the lands which he has never beheld; it is no rare phenomenon for historian or dramatist to read the most secret thoughts in the hearts of men who lived a thousand years ago! And their clairvoyance immeasurably exceeds, in the marvel of its second-sight, the clairvoyance ascribed to the most eminent somnambule, inasmuch as it is not precarious and fluctuating — a glimpse into light "above the visible diurnal sphere" swallowed up in Cimmerian darkness, but calm and habitual, improved by increasing practice, courting tests and giving them; the larger and more mingled the crowd of spectators, the more surely does their clairvoyance display its powers and confound the sceptic by its proofs. And whereas the clairvoyance of the somnambule has solved no riddle in nature, added no invention to art, the clairvoyance of wakeful intellect has originated all the manifold knowledge we now possess — predicted each step of our progress — divined every obstacle that encumbered the way — lit beacons that never fade in the wastes of the past — taken into its chart the headlands that loom through the future. Every art, every craft that gives

bread to the millions, came originally forth from some brain that saw it first in the typical image. Before the very paper I write on could be fashioned from rags, some musing inventor must have seen in his lucid clairvoyance the idea of a thing that was not yet existent. It is obviously undeniable that every invention added to our uses must have been invented before it was seen — that is, its image must have appeared to the inventor "through some other organ than his eyes."

It is amusing to read the ingenious hypotheses framed by critics who were not themselves poets, in order to trace in Shakespeare's writings the footprints of his bodily life. I have seen it inferred as proof positive, from the description of the samphire-gatherer, that Shakespeare must have stood on the cliffs of Dover. I have followed the inductions of an argument intended to show, from the fidelity of his colourings of Italian scenery, that Shakespeare must have travelled into Italy. His use of legal technicalities has been cited as a satisfactory evidence that he had been an attorney's clerk; his nice perception of morbid anatomy has enrolled him among the sons of *Æsculapius* as a medical student; and from his general tendency to philosophical speculation it has been seriously maintained that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare at all. So fine a philosopher could not have been a vagabond stage-player; he must have been the prince of professed philosophers — the Lord Chancellor of Nature — Bacon himself, and no other! But does it not occur to such discriminating observers that Shakespeare's knowledge is no less accurate when applied to forms of life and periods of the world into which his personal ex-

perience could not possibly have given him an insight, than it was when applied to the description of Dover Cliff, or couched in a metaphor borrowed from the law courts? Possibly he might have seen with his own bodily eyes the samphire-gatherer hanging between earth and sky; but with his own bodily eyes had he seen Brutus in his tent on the fatal eve of Philippi? Possibly he might have scrawled out a deed of conveyance to John Doe; but had he any hand in Cæsar's will, or was he consulted by Mark Antony as to the forensic use to which that will could be applied in obtaining from a Roman jury a verdict against the liberties of Rome? To account for Shakespeare's lucidity in things done on earth before Dover Cliff had been seen by the earliest Saxon immigrant, there is but one supposition agreeable to the theory that Shakespeare must have seen Dover Cliff with his own bodily eyes because he describes it so well: Shakespeare must have been, not Lord Bacon, but Pythagoras, who had lived as Euphorbus in the times of the Trojan war, and who, under some name or other (why not in that of Shakespeare?) might therefore have been living in the reign of Elizabeth, linking in one individual memory the annals of perished states and extinguished races.

But then, it may be said, "Shakespeare is an exception to all normal mortality: no rule applicable to inferior genius can be drawn from the speciality of that enigmatical monster!"

This assertion would not be correct. Shakespeare is indeed the peerless prince of clairvoyants — "*Nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum.*" — But the scale of honour descends downward, and down, not only through

the Dii Majores of Genius, but to many an earthborn Curius and Camillus.

The gift of seeing through other organs than the eyes is more or less accurately shared by all in whom imagination is strongly concentrated upon any selected object, however distant and apart from the positive experience of material senses. Certainly if there were any creature in the world whom a quiet prim respectable printer could never have come across in the flesh and the blood, it would be a daring magnificent libertine — a *roué* of fashion the most exquisitely urbane — a prodigal of wit the most riotously lavish. It was only through clairvoyance that a Richardson could have ever beheld a Lovelace. But Richardson does not only behold Lovelace, he analyses and dissects him — minutes every impulse in that lawless heart, unravels every web in that wily brain. The refiners on Shakespeare who would interpret his life from his writings, and reduce his clairvoyance into commonplace reminiscence, would, by the same process of logic, prove Richardson to have been the confidential valet of Wilmot Lord Rochester; or, at least in some time of his life, to have been a knavish attorney in the Old Bailey of love. Nothing is more frequent among novelists, even third-rate and fourth-rate, than “to see through other organs than their eyes.” Clairvoyance is the badge of all their tribe. They can describe scenes they have never witnessed more faithfully than the native who has *lived* amid those scenes from his cradle.

I could cite many indisputable proofs of this phenomenon amongst my brethren in the masonry of fiction; but as I here contend that the gift, so far from being a rare attribute of genius, is shared, in a greater or

lesser degree, by all who concentrate imagination on particular objects, I abstain from a reference that would not convey the homage of a compliment, but the affront of a disparagement. And, therefore, neither in self-conceit, nor in self-depreciation, but just as a chemist who suggests a theory naturally adds to his suggestion the statement of his own experiments, I offer my personal evidence in favour of the doctrine I advance — viz., “that there is nothing so rare as to excite our incredulous wonder in the faculty of seeing ‘through other organs than the eyes.’” I have had sometimes to describe minutely, scenes which, at the time of describing, I had never witnessed. I visited those scenes later. I then examined them, with a natural apprehension that I must have committed some notable mistake to be carefully corrected in any subsequent edition of the work in which such descriptions had been temerarily adventured. In no single instance could I ever find, after the most rigid scrutiny, that the clairvoyance of imagination had deceived me. I found nothing in the scenery I witnessed to induce me to retouch an outline or a colouring in the scenery I had imagined. I am not sure, indeed, that I could not describe the things I imagine more exactly than the things I habitually see. I am not sure that I could not give a more truthful picture of the Nile, which I have never beheld except in my dreams, than I could of the little lake at the bottom of my own park, on the banks of which I loitered out my schoolboy holidays, and (could I but hallow their turf as Christian burial-ground) would desire to choose my grave.

Well, but is it only poets and novelists — creatures whom my stockbroker would call “the children of

fancy," and my apothecary classify amongst "highly-nervous patients" — is it only poets and novelists on whom the faculty of seeing "through other organs than the eyes" is bestowed?

When the great Rothschild leant his burly back against the old grey column in the money mart — "*cuncta supercilio movens*" — no one could suppose that he founded his calculations on the numbers of the Hebrew Cabala — no one could ascribe to him any profound knowledge even of vulgar fractions. Shallow disparagers said, no doubt, that the luminous Jew had ample sources of secret information. So he had! But other Jews have had sources of secret information brought to bear on a judgment more cultured than that of the letterless Rothschild, and have still never gained his clairvoyance.

Ten physicians may be equals in learning — know, with equal minuteness, our anatomical structure — may with equal research have ransacked the lore of prescriptions, scrutinised the same number of tongues, counted the same number of pulses; — but if I want to know what is really the cause of my suffering, I am assured by my apothecary that there is one man out of these ten physicians who "has the doctor's eye" — that is, the gift of clairvoyance.

Men disciplined in the study of severest science, only through reason discover what through imagination they prewise. I was mistaken in calling Shakespeare "peerless" in the gift of clairvoyance — Newton's clairvoyance is not less marvellous than Shakespeare's. To imagine the things they have never seen, and to imagine them accurately, constitutes the poetry of philosophers, as it constitutes the philosophy of poets.

Kant startled an Englishman with a description of Westminster Bridge, so minutely detailed, that his listener in amazement asked him how many years he had lived in London? Kant had never been out of Prussia — scarcely out of Königsberg.

Take that department of knowledge in which we most beware of mere fancy — “political knowledge.” Who has not heard of “the prophetic eye of the statesman”? Nor is it only the great minister, to whose hands nations confide the destiny of races unborn, in whom this clairvoyance is notable. On the contrary, I suspect that men in high office, compelled to deal with business as it rises from day to day, have less of “the prophetic eye” than many an obscure politician who has never gone to sleep on the Treasury bench. I have known men who sat on fifth rows in the House of Commons, and have never been heard in debate — nay, I have known men who never sat in Parliament at all — in whom “the prophetic eye” has been as sure as Cassandra’s. Men, who behold afar off the shadows of events not yet coming — predict the questions that will divide cabinets yet unformed — name, amongst the adversaries of such questions, the converts by whose aid the questions will be carried — and fix, as if they had read it in the almanac, the very date in which some crotchety motion, the nursling of a minority, will rise into place amongst the laws of the land. Two men have I known, who, in this gift of political prevision, excelled all the chiefs of our senate; the one was a saturnine tailor, the other a meditative saddler.

The truth really seems to be, that the imagination acquires by custom a certain involuntary unconscious

power of observation and comparison, correcting its own mistakes, and arriving at precision of judgment, just as the outward eye is disciplined to compare, adjust, estimate, measure, the objects reflected on the back of its retina. The imagination is but the faculty of glassing images; and it is with exceeding difficulty, and by the imperative will of the reasoning faculty resolved to mislead it, that it glasses images which have no prototype in truth and nature. I can readily imagine a wombat which I have never seen; but it is only with violent effort, and constrained by the false assurance of some naturalist, whose authority has subjected my reason, which in turn subjects my imagination, that I can imagine a wombat with two heads.

If an Oriental idolater figured to himself a deity in the form of a man, but with the beak of an eagle or the horns of a bull, it was because, by some philosophical abstraction, founded on metaphysical inquiries into the attributes of deity, the eagle's beak was a symbol of superterrestrial majesty — the bull's horns a symbol of superhuman power. This is not the error of simple, childlike imagination, but the deluding subtlety of parables in metaphysical science. Where the imagination is left clear from disturbing causes — no confusing shadow cast upon its wave from the shores that confine it — there, with an equal fidelity, it reflects the star that is aloof from it by myriads of miles, or the heron that has just soared from the neighbouring reeds.

The clairvoyance of poet or novelist is lucid in proportion as, while intent on forms remote, it is unruffled by the shift and change which are constantly varying the outlines of things familiar. On what im-

mediately affects ourselves in our practical personal existence our perceptions are rarely clear. The ablest lawyer, when threatened by a lawsuit that puts in jeopardy his own estate, will take the advice of another counsel, whose judgment is free from the anxiety that affects his own; the most penetrating physician, when seriously ill himself, summons a fellow-practitioner to examine his symptoms and prescribe his remedy.

Be our business in life howsoever hard and prosaic, we shall not attain any eminent success in its conduct if we despise the clairvoyance which imagination alone bestows. No man can think justly but what he is compelled to imagine — that is, his thoughts must come before him in images. Every thought not distinctly imaged is imperfect and abortive.

Hence, when some lover of the marvellous tells me, gape-mouthed, of the last astounding phenomenon in mesmeric clairvoyance, I somewhat disappoint him by saying, "Is that all?" For I cannot pass half-an-hour in my library — I cannot converse familiarly with any one capable of the simplest invention by which a thing or a thing's uses not discovered yesterday, seen to-day "through other organs than the eyes," will to-morrow be added to the world's practical possessions — but what I find instances of normal clairvoyance immeasurably more wonderful than those erratic gleams of lucidity in magnetic sleep, which one man reveres as divine and another man disdains as incredible.



ESSAY V.

ON INTELLECTUAL CONDUCT AS DISTINCT FROM MORAL:
THE "SUPERIOR MAN."

ON INTELLECTUAL CONDUCT AS DISTINCT FROM MORAL: THE "SUPERIOR MAN."

Not unfrequently we find the world according high position to some man in whom we recognise no merits commensurate with that superiority which we are called upon to confess; no just claims to unwonted deference, whether in majestic genius or heroic virtue; no titles even to that conventional homage which civilised societies have agreed to render to patrician ancestry or to plebeian wealth. The moral character, the mental attributes, of this Superior Man, adorned by no pomp of heraldic blazonry, no profusion of costly gilding, seem to us passably mediocre; yet mediocrity, so wont to be envious, acknowledges his eminence, and sets him up as an authority. He is considered more safe than genius; more practical than virtue. Princes, orators, authors, yield to his mysterious ascendancy. He imposes himself on gods and men, quiet and inexorable as the Necessity of the Greek poets. Why or wherefore the Olympians should take for granted his right to the place he assumes, we know not, we humbler mortals; but we yield, where they yield; — idle to contend against Necessity.

Yet there is a cause for every effect; and a cause there must be for the superiority of this Superior Man, in whom there is nothing astonishing except his success.

Examined closely, the cause may be found in this: True that his intellectual stature is no higher than ours, but, whether from art or from nature, it has got a portlier demeanour and a statelier gait. We do not measure its inches — we are so struck by the way it carries itself.

In a word, there is an intellectual conduct as well as a moral conduct; and as a fellow-mortal, in whom the gross proportions of good or evil are much about the average, may so conduct himself morally, that somehow or other his faults are always in the shade, and his merits always in the sunlight, so a fellow-mortal may conduct himself intellectually; taking care that such mind as he has is never surprised in unfavourable positions.

There are various secrets for that exaltation of mediocrity which is so felicitously illustrated in the repute of "the Superior Man." Perhaps the secret most efficacious is to be found in judicious parsimony of speech. The less said the better. "*Facunda silentia linguæ*," as Gray expresses it, with all his characteristic happiness of epithet. If the exigencies of social life would allow of rigid silence, I do not doubt that rigid silence, with a practised discipline of countenance, and a significant diplomacy of gesture, would be esteemed the special indication of wisdom. For as every man has a right to be considered innocent till he be proved guilty, so every man has a right to be considered exempt from folly till he be proved foolish. It would be difficult to prove a man foolish who keeps himself to himself, and never commits his tongue to the risk of an opinion.

A certain nobleman, some years ago, was con-

spicuous for his success in the world. He had been employed in the highest situations at home and abroad, without one discoverable reason for his selection, and without justifying the selection by one proof of administrative ability. Yet at each appointment the public said — "A great gain to the Government! Superior man!" And when from each office he passed away, or rather passed imperceptibly onward towards office still more exalted, the public said — "A great loss to the Government! Superior man!" He was the most silent person I ever met. But when the first reasoners of the age would argue some knotty point in his presence, he would, from time to time, slightly elevate his eyebrows, gently shake his head, or, by a dexterous smile of significant complacency, impress on you the notion how easily he could set those babblers right, if he would but condescend to give voice to the wisdom within him.

I was very young when I first met this Superior Man; and chancing the next day to call on the late Lord Durham, I said, in the presumption of early years, "I passed six mortal hours last evening in company with Lord ——. I don't think there is much in him!"

"Good heavens!" cried Lord Durham, "how did you find that out? Is it possible that he could have — talked?"

The Pythagorean example set by the fortunate peer I have referred to, few can emulate to an equal abnegation of the hazardous faculty of speech. But the more a man, desirous to pass at a value above his worth, can contract by dignified silence the garrulity of trivial minds, the more the world will give him

credit for the wealth which he does not possess. When we see a dumb strong-box with its lid braced down in iron clasps, and secured by a jealous padlock, involuntarily we suppose that its contents must be infinitely more precious than the gauds and nicknacks which are unguardedly scattered about a lady's drawing-room. Who could believe that a box so rigidly locked had nothing in it but odds and ends, which would be just as safe in a handbox? When we analyse the virtue of a prudent silence, we gain a clue to other valuable secrets in the mystery of intellectual conduct. The main reason why silence is so efficacious an element of repute, is — 1st, because of that magnification which proverbially belongs to the unknown; and, 2dly, because silence provokes no man's envy, and wounds no man's self-love. Hence the gifts congruous to, and concomitant with, the genius of taciturnity are — 1st, that general gravity of demeanour which Rochefoucauld happily terms "the mystery of the body;" and, 2dly, an abstinence from all the shows and pretences by which one man provokes the self-love of others in the arrogant parade of his own self-esteem.

He who, seeing how much Appearances govern the world, desires himself to achieve the rank of an Appearance, and obtain, as such, the credit that is accorded to the substance of merit, yet be as safe as a phantom against the assaults to which the substance is unavoidably exposed, will be duly mindful of the rules thus prescribed to his conduct of himself. His life will be as void as his talk of all aggressive brilliancy. His dress will be decorous — for a sloven invites ridicule; but studious of that plainness which disarms

the jealousy of fops. His entertainments will be hospitable, his table good — for civilised man has the gratitude of the palate; but he will shun the ostentation which wounds the pride of the poor, and irritates the vanity of the rich. The guest should carry away with him the benignant reminiscence of a courteous reception and a savoury repast, with a heart unaggrieved by a mortifying pomp, and a digestion unspoil by splenetic envy. Dante says of the valley in which his pilgrimage commences, *Dove il sol tace* — “Where the sun is silent.” The sun of the Man superior to his deserts is always silent.

In his intellectual conduct, this admirable Personage thus on principle avoids making enemies. Extreme in nothing, and neutral whenever he can be so without giving offence, he is no violent party-man. Violent party-men are always ill-used by the chiefs of party; it is the moderate men whom the chiefs desire to secure; and even the antagonistic journals do not blame the Minister who rewards the seasonable vote of a judicious temporiser by the place he is not so rashly grateful as to bestow on a supporter indiscreetly enthusiastic. On the other hand, the Superior Man steers as clear from inconvenient friendships as from vindictive enmities. He confides to no one his infirmities or his sorrows; in his intervals of bodily sickness he only complains to his physician; for infirmity and sorrow are indisputable evidences of our frail mortality, and as such they *deconsider* (may the Gallicism be pardoned) the idealised Appearance to which the mortal is refined. The sham or eidolon of a Superior Man cannot afford to be convicted of a weakness. He puts it into the power of no Pylades to say, “Poor

Orestes, what a pity he should be so fond of that baggage Hermione!" The Superior Man sows only a plentiful crop of useful acquaintances. He is as much bound by his tenure of position to avoid sowing friends as the farmer was bound in old leases to abstain from sowing flax. Flax and friendship draw from the soil more nutriment than they give back to it.

The Superior Man is not one with whom you would take a liberty. You do not expect from him those trifling services which you ask from the man who permits you to consider him your friend; you do not write to him to hire you a house or engage you a servant; you never say of him, "The best creature alive!" Consequently he escapes all the taxes which social intercourse levies on the man who is weak enough to pay them. He is asked for nothing; so that when he gives something, unsolicited and of his own accord, his generosity is in all men's mouths.

To preserve this sublime independence from the claims of others, it is essential that the Superior Man should never be known to ask for anything for himself. Nor does he; he gets what he wants without asking: offers are made to him; the things he desires are pressed upon him; he accepts them — from a sense of duty! He is fond of the word Duty; it is often in his mouth; it is a word that offends nobody, and has in this an advantage over significants of merit more high-sounding — such as Honour, Virtue, Morality, Religion. He owes a duty to himself — to make the most of himself that he possibly can do. He discharges that duty — as if he were a martyr to the public.

The Superior Man never calumniates, never wantonly slanders another; but he never provokes hostility by

admiring or by defending another. All men worthy of praise are sure to have powerful antagonists to whom the praise of them is offensive. To praise a great man is a challenge and an insult to those who decry. But why go out of one's way to take his part? Is he a great man? Then Posterity will do him justice; leave him to Posterity; Posterity can do you no harm. Besides, admiration of another is a half confession of inferiority in yourself. Who admires that which he possesses in a superior degree? The Superior Man, so long as he maintains himself an Appearance, possesses everything to a degree superior to those by whom anything is indiscreetly adventured. If he do not do so, it is for you to discover it, not for him to confess it. Usually, therefore, when the Superior Man speaks of a great man, it is with a delicate kindness, an exquisite indulgent compassion, that attests his own superiority. The veteran hero is "my poor old friend;" the rising statesman is "that clever young fellow — as times go!" The Superior Man, whatever his birth, is in one respect at least always a gentleman — in appearance. He is not cringing to the lofty — he is not rude to the lowly. He knows that the real Great World, with all its disparities, has at heart much of the democracy of a public school; and he avails himself of that truth to obtain, in a general well-bred way, the privileges of equality with all whom he shakes by the hand. This is to his advantage; for he so contrives it that those whose hands are of no use to him are contented with his gracious and cordial nod. The hands he shakes are the hands that help him to rise.

He is what the world calls "an Enlightened Man;" but, practical as well as enlightened, while he keeps

up with his own time he never goes beyond it. What to him is all time after he shall have gone to his grave? "I dead, the world is dead," saith the Italian proverb. Nor are his opinions known till as a Superior Man he is sure to be in his right place with the superior party. If this Christian people were to turn Mohammedan, so long as they were in a state of transition, the Superior Man would slip out of sight. You would hear nothing of him while saints were fighting and martyrs burning. But when the crisis was over, and St Paul's Cathedral was converted into the Grand Mosque, you would see him walking down the street, on his way to the temple, arm-in-arm with the Prime Minister.

ESSAY VI.

ON SHYNESS.

ON SHYNESS.

PLUTARCH has an essay upon that defect which he calls *Dusopia* (*δυσωπία*) — a word signifying an unhappy facility of being put out of countenance — viz., shamefacedness — shyness. Plutarch seems to consider that *Dusopia* consisted chiefly in the difficulty of saying No; and has a stock of anecdotes illustrating the tragic consequences which may result from that pusillanimous characteristic of Shyness. It not only subjects us to the loss of our money when a slippery acquaintance asks us for a loan which we are perfectly aware he never intends to repay, but sometimes life itself is the penalty of that cowardly shyness which cannot say No to a disagreeable invitation. Antipater was invited to an entertainment by Demetrius, and, feeling ashamed to evince distrust of a man whom he himself had entertained the day before, went forebodingly to the shambles. Polysperchon had been bribed by Cassander to make away with Hercules, the young son whom Barsina bore to Alexander. Accordingly he invited Hercules to supper. So long as Hercules could get off the invitation by note or message, he valiantly excused himself; but when Polysperchon called in person, and said, burlily, "Why do you refuse my invitation? — Gods! can you suspect me of any design against your

life?" poor Hercules was too shy to imply, by continued refusal, that such design was exactly what he suspected. Accordingly he suffered himself to be carried away, and in the midst of the supper was murdered.

Nowadays, Shyness does not entail on us a fate so lugubriously tragic. True, that a perfidious host does his best to poison us by a villanous *entrée*, or "the pure beverage" secured to us, by commercial treaty, at a shilling a bottle; still the effect is not usually mortal. Permitted to return home, we have a fair chance of recovery. The poison may be neutralised by sable antidotes, combining salts with senna; or scientifically withdrawn from the system, by applying an instrument, constructed on hydraulic principles, to the cavity assigned to digestive operations.

I do not, therefore, cite from Plutarch the fate of Hercules as a fair instance of the danger we may anticipate, if too shy to say No to an invitation which it oppresses the spirits to accept; but rather to notice, with a certain consolatory pride (being myself somewhat shy by original constitution), how much, in one peculiar development of Shyness, I resemble the son of Alexander the Great. That unfortunate prince could excuse himself from Polysperchon's odious invitation so long as Polysperchon did not urge it in person. Just like me! Send me an invitation to dinner to which I can reply by note or message, and if I wish to say "No," I can say it like a man; but invaded in my own house, or waylaid in the street, clapped on the shoulder, accosted vigorously, with a hypocritical frankness, "Fie, my dear sir — not dine with me? What are you afraid of? Do you think I shall give you the

Gladstone claret?" — then Dusopia seizes me at once; I succumb like the son of Alexander. And every man entitled to call himself Shy, would, if similarly pressed, prove as weak as Hercules and I.

Whole communities have been enslaved by Shyness. Plutarch quotes the saying that the people of Asia only submitted to a single despot because they were too bashful to pronounce the word No.

We ourselves, we sturdy English, were seized with that cowardly but well-bred Dusopia on the Restoration of Charles II. We became, all at once, too shy to ask for the smallest of those safeguards against absolute rule, for which we had just before been shedding our life-blood. It seemed so unmannerly to pester that pleasant young prince with the very business which would annoy him the most; it was so much more polite to trust our freedom to a man of such station, as a debt of honour between gentleman and gentleman, than to vulgarise a generous confidence to the mercantile formalities of a legal security. It was Shyness, and nothing else, that made the bashful conquerors in the Great Rebellion so delicately silent about themselves in the welcome they gave to the courteous and elegant exile. In fact, they have no other excuse; they were shy, and they shied away their liberties.

But the difficulty of saying No is not the only characteristic of Shyness, though it is, perhaps, of all characteristics, that which the Shy have most in common.

The shy man *par excellence* — the man inveterately, idiosyncratically shy — is exposed to perils at every

angle of his sensitive many-sided conformation. His servants disregard him — he is too shy to tell them of their faults. His very friendships wound him — the very benefits he confers are so awkwardly given that they are resented as injuries. He loses the object of his affection because he is too bashful to woo. He is snapt up by a masculine shrew, who insists upon having him because she foresees she can rule him. As soon as he is married, he is at his wife's mercy — a woman is seldom merciful to the man who is timid.

If he ever shine in a career, it is by sheer merit of so rare an order that it lights up its owner in spite of himself. But whether in the world or in his household, he weaves a solitude round him. He is shy to his very children. His new-born babe stares him out of countenance.

Providence, so mindful of all its creatures, bestows on the shy man two properties for self-defence. The first is dissimulation. As frankness is the very reverse of shyness, so to be uniformly shy is to be habitually secret. The poor wretch does not mean to be deceitful, but he cannot help it. He sometimes astounds those who think they know him best by what appears at the surface to be the blackest perfidy. He suffers annoyances to accumulate without implying by a word that he even feels them, until he can bear them no longer. Then suddenly he absconds, shuts himself up in some inaccessible fortress, and has recourse to his pen, with which, safe at a distance, his shyness corrupts into ferocity. It was but the other day that a shy acquaintance of mine threw his family into consternation, by going off, none knew whither, and sending his lawyer with a deed of separation to the unsuspecting wife,

who for ten years had tormented him without provoking a syllable of complaint.

Another safeguard to the shy man, is in the contagion of Shyness that he communicates to others. It is difficult not to feel shy, when brought in contact with the shy. They give you no opening to the business which you wish to transact with them. As Plutarch says, "they will not look you in the face." It seems, while you talk, as if they suspected you to be a pick-pocket. Therefore, unconsciously to yourself, but from your natural desire to prove yourself an honest man, you soften in their favour the terms you would otherwise have proposed. Nor is this all: for if they have certain claims to respect, natural or acquired, such as high birth, superior wealth, reputation for learning, sanctity, or genius, their timidity inspires you with awe. You mistake it for pride. The atmosphere around them, if withering to cordial friendship, is equally repellent of intrusive presumption. They take liberties with no one; it would be a monstrous impertinence to take liberties with them. These, unquestionably, are safeguards to a creature otherwise helpless. The self-conservation of bold animals is in boldness; of timid, in timidity.

I have been treating here of the man incorrigibly, permanently shy. But a large proportion of us are shy in early life, and cease to be so as we live on; and many of us remain, to a certain degree, shy to the last, but not so shy as to be emphatically shy.

In youth, our individual position is uncertain and dubious. Be our birth ever so ancient, our fortune ever so large, still our own personal merit remains to be assessed, and a proud or sensitive nature will be

desirous of an approbation for something distinct from a pedigree or a rent-roll. Nay, amongst the young, in England especially, Shyness will be found more prevalent with the high-born than the plebeian. The plebeian, who has in him the force and desire to shoulder his own way through the crowd, more often errs by the rude eagerness to combat, than the refining anxiety to please.

Vigorous competition is the best cure for a morbid excess of Shyness. Thus, it is noticeable that the eldest sons of good family are generally more shy than the younger — and probably shy in proportion as they feel within themselves merits distinct from their social advantages, but which they are not compelled to test betimes like their younger brothers. But high rank is in England so generally associated with the discharge of public duties, that if these elder sons be born to pre-eminent stations, their shyness will often wear away, when their faculties are called into exercise by the very inheritance which deprives them of the stimulus of gain, but, bringing them at once before the criticism of public opinion, supplies a motive for coveting public esteem. A great proprietor doubles his influence in his county if he be active or beloved. In the House of Lords itself, a baron and a duke meet foot to foot upon equal terms; and if the baron prove himself the better man of the two, he will be the weightier peer. Thus many a young noble, oppressively shy while he is nothing but a young noble, becomes self-composed and self-confident when he succeeds to his inheritance, and has to show what there is in him, not as noble alone, but as man.

To come back to Plutarch — Shyness has its good

qualities, and has only its bad when it is Dusopia in excess. "We must prune it with care," says our philosopher, "so as only to remove the redundant branches, and not injure the stem, which has its root in the generous sensitiveness to shame."

A certain degree of shyness in early life is, indeed, not the invariable, but still the most frequent, concomitant of that desire of esteem which is jealous of honour, or that love of glory which concentrates genius on objects worthy of renown.

I grant, indeed, that merit is not always modest. When a man has unmistakably done a something that is meritorious, he must know it; and he cannot in his heart undervalue that something, otherwise he would never have strained all his energies to do it. But till he has done it, it is not sure that he can do it; and if, relying upon what he fancies to be genius, he does not take as much pains as if he were dull, the probability is that he will not do it at all. Therefore merit not proved is modest; it covets approbation, but is not sure that it can win it. And while thus eager for its object, and secretly strengthening all its powers to achieve it by a wise distrust of unproved capacities, and a fervent admiration for the highest models, merit is tremulously shy.

Akin, indeed, with Shyness, more lasting — often as strong in the zenith of a career as at its commencement — is a certain nervous susceptibility, — a perpetual comparison between one's own powers and some ideal standard of excellence which one can never wholly attain, but towards which one is always striving. "Every wyse man," says Roger Ascham, with a meaning not less profound for the paradox that appears

on the surface — “every wyse man that wysely would learn anything, shall chiefly go about that whereunto he knoweth well that he shall never come.” And the old scholar explains his dogma thus: —

“In every crafte there is a perfect excellency, which may be better known in a man's mind than followed in a man's dede. This perfectnesse, because it is generally layed as a broad wyde example afore all men, no one particular man is able to compasse; and as it is general to all men, so it is perpetual for all time, which proveth it a thing for man impossible, — although not for the capacities of his thinking, which is heavenleye, yet surely for the ability of our workings, which is worldly.” And this quaint precursor and foreshadower of the German philosopher's æsthetic archetype, proceeds to argue that this ideal “perfectnesse” prevents despair; “for no man being so perfect but what another may be better, every man may be encouraged to take more pains than his fellows.”

Now, I apprehend that the ideal excellence thus admirably described is always present to the contemplation of the highest order of genius, and tends to quicken and perpetuate the nervous susceptibility, which inspires courage while it seems like fear.

Nervousness, to give the susceptibility I speak of its familiar name, is perhaps the quality which great orators have the most in common. I doubt whether there has been any public speaker of the highest order of eloquence who has not felt an anxiety or apprehension, more or less actually painful, before rising to address an audience upon any very important subject on which he has meditated beforehand. This nervousness will, indeed, probably be proportioned to the

amount of previous preparation, even though the necessities of reply or the changeful temperament which characterises public assemblies may compel the orator to modify, alter, perhaps wholly reject, what, in previous preparation, he had designed to say. The fact of preparation itself had impressed him with the dignity of the subject — with the responsibilities that devolve on an advocate from whom much is expected, on whose individual utterance results affecting the interests of many may depend. His imagination had been roused and warmed, and there is no imagination where there is no sensibility. Thus the orator had mentally surveyed, as it were, at a distance, the loftiest height of his argument; and now, when he is about to ascend to it, the awe of the altitude is felt.

According to traditions, despite the majestic self-possession Lord Macaulay truly ascribes to the tenor of his life, Mr. Pitt was nervous before rising to speak; hence, perhaps, his recourse to stimulants. A surgeon, eminent in Brighton, some years ago told me that when he was a shopboy in London, he used to bring to Mr. Pitt the dose of laudanum and sal-volatile which the great statesman habitually took before speaking. The laudanum perhaps hurt his constitution more than the port wine, which he drank by the bottle; the wine might be necessary to sustain the physical spirits lowered by the laudanum. Mr. Fox was nervous before speaking; so, I have heard, was Lord Plunket. A distinguished member of the Whig party, now no more, and who was himself one of the most sensitive of men and one of the most attractive of orators, told me that once in the House of Commons he had crossed over to speak to Mr. Canning on some question of

public business, a little time before the latter delivered one of his most remarkable speeches; and on taking the hand Mr. Canning extended to him, he exclaimed, "I fear you are ill, your hand is so cold and damp." "Is it?" answered Canning, smiling; "so much the better: that shows how nervous I am; I shall speak well to-night." Mr. Stapylton remarks how perceptible to those familiar with Mr. Canning was the difference in his aspect and manner before and after one of his great orations; and a very clever French writer upon the Art of Oratory compares the anguish (*angoisse*) which oppresses the mind of a public speaker while burdened with the sense of some great truth that he is charged to utter, with the joyous elation of spirit that follows the relief from the load.

The truth is, that nervousness is sympathetic. It imparts a strange magnetic affinity with the audience; it redoubles the orator's attention to the effect he is producing on his audience; it quickens his self-possession, it stimulates his genius, it impresses on those around him a fellow-feeling, for it evinces earnestness, and earnestness is the soul of oratory — the link between the lips of one and the hearts of many. Round an orb that is self-luminous the atmosphere always quivers. When a man does not feel nervous before rising, he may certainly make an excellent sensible speech, but let him not count on realising the higher success which belongs to great orators alone.

In speeches thoroughly impromptu, in which the mind of the speaker has not had leisure to brood over what he is called upon suddenly to say, the nervousness either does not exist or is much less painfully felt; because then the speaker has not set before his

imagination some ideal perfection to which he desires to attain, and of which he fears to fall short. And this I take to be the main reason why speakers who so value themselves on readiness that they never revolve beforehand what they can glibly utter, do not rise beyond mediocrity. To no such speaker has posterity accorded the name of orator. The extempore speaker is not an orator, though the orator must of necessity be, whenever occasion calls for it, an extempore speaker. Extemporaneous speaking is, indeed, the groundwork of the orator's art; preparation is the last finish, and the most difficult of all his accomplishments. To learn by heart as a schoolboy, or to prepare as an orator, are two things not only essentially different, but essentially antagonistic to each other; for the work most opposed to an effective oration is an elegant essay.

As with the orator, so, though in a less degree, it is with the writer — indeed, with all intellectual aspirants. The author, whatever he attempts, from an epic to an epigram, should set before his ambition that "perfect excellency which is better known in a man's mind than followed in a man's dede." Aim at the highest, and at least you soar; but the moment you set before yourself an ideal of excellence, you are as subject to diffidence as, according to Roger Ascham, you are freed from despair. Emulation, even in the brutes, is sensitively "nervous." See the tremor of the thoroughbred racer before he starts. The dray-horse does not tremble, but he does not emulate. It is not his work to run a race. Says Marcus Antoninus, "It is all one to a stone whether it be thrown upwards or downwards." Yet the emulation of a man of genius is

seldom with his contemporaries, — that is, inwardly in his mind — although outwardly, in his acts, it would seem so. The competitors with whom his secret ambition seeks to vie are the dead. Before his vision rise all the masters of the past in the art to which he devotes his labour. If he forget them to study his contemporaries, he is undone — he becomes a plagiarist. From that which time has made classical we cannot plagiarise. The spirit of our own age compels us to be original, even where we imitate the forms of an age gone by. Molière cannot plagiarise from Terence and Plautus, nor Racine from Euripides, nor Pope from Horace, nor Walter Scott from the old Border Minstrels. Where they imitate they reproduce. But we cannot reproduce what is actually living. We cannot reproduce our contemporaries; we can but copy them if we take them as our models. The desire of excellence is the necessary attribute of those who excel. We work little for a thing unless we wish for it. But we cannot of ourselves estimate the degree of our success in what we strive for — that task is left to others. With the desire for excellence comes, therefore, the desire for approbation. And this distinguishes intellectual excellence from moral excellence; for the latter has no necessity of human tribunal; it is more inclined to shrink from the public than to invite the public to be its judge. To the aspirants to moral good the *vox populi* is not the *vox Dei*. The Capitol has no laurel crowns for their brows; enough for them if they pass over earth unobserved, silently educating themselves for heaven. There are natures so happily constituted that they are moved irresistibly to good by an inborn affinity to goodness; for some souls, like

some forms, are born into the world, beautiful, and take as little apparent pains as do beautiful forms to increase or preserve beauty. They have but to maintain health by the way of life most in harmony with their organisation, and their beauty endures to the last; for old age has a beauty of its own, even in the physical form; and the Moral Beautiful gradually becomes venerable without even losing its bloom.

But these natures are exceptions to the ordinary law of our race, which proportions the moral worth of a man, as it does the worth of a work from his hand, to the degree of skilled labour by which he has transformed into new shapes the original raw material. And labour needs motive; and motive implies reward.

To moral excellence there are two rewards, neither of which is bestowed by the loud huzzas of the populace; one within the conscience — one far out of reach, beyond the stars.

But for intellectual excellence, man asks first a test, and next a reward, in the praise of his fellow-men.

Therefore the love of human approbation is at the root of all those sustained labours by which man works out his ideal of intellectual excellence; at least so generally, that we need not care to count the exceptions. During the later stages of a great career, that love of approbation, in a mind well disciplined, often ceases to be perceptible, chiefly because it has become too habitually familiar to retain distinctness. We are, then, as little acutely sensible of the pervading force of the motive, as, while in health, we are sensible of the beats of our pulse and the circulation of our blood. But there it still is, no less; — *there*, in the pulse, in

the blood. A cynic or a misanthrope may disown it; but if he have genius, and the genius urge him to address men even in vindication of misanthropy and cynicism, he is inevitably courting the approbation which he pretends to scorn. As Cicero says with quiet irony, "The authors who affect contempt for a name in the world, put their names to the books which they invite the world to read." But to return to my starting-point — The desire of approbation will be accompanied by that nervous susceptibility which, however well disguised, is inseparable from the vibrating oscillation between hope and fear. And this nervousness in things not made mechanically familiar by long practice, will be in proportion to the height of a man's own standard of excellence, and the care with which he measures the difficulties that interpose between a cherished conception and a worthy execution of design.

Out of this nervousness comes the shyness common to all youth, where it aspires to excel and fears to fail.

It follows, from what I have said, that those races are the most active, have accomplished the greatest marvels of energy, and, on the whole, exhibit the highest standard of public honesty in administrative departments, to which the national character of Shyness is generally accorded, distinct from its false counterfeit — Pride.

For the best guarantee for honesty is a constant sense of responsibility, and that sense is rendered lively and acute by a certain anxious diffidence of self — which is — Shyness. And again, it is that diffidence which makes men take pains to win and deserve success — stimulates energy and sustains perseverance.

The Turk is proud, not shy; he walks the world, or rather lets the world walk by him, serene in his self-esteem. The Red Indian is proud, not shy; his dignity admits of no *Dusopia* — is never embarrassed nor taken by surprise. But the Turk and the Red Indian do not improve; and when civilisation approaches them, it is rather to corrupt than enlighten. The British race are shy, to a proverb. And what shore does not bear the stamp of their footstep? What boundary in the regions of intellect has yet satisfied their ardour of progress? Ascham's ideal of perfectness is in the mind of the whole nation.

To desire to do something, not only as well as it can be done, but better than we can do it — to feel to exaggeration all our own natural deficiencies towards the doing of it — to resolve by redoubled energy and perseverance to extract from art whatever may supply those deficiencies in nature; — this is the surest way to become great — this is the character of the English race — this should be the character of an English genius.

But he who thus feels, thus desires, and thus resolves, will keep free from rust those mainsprings of action — the sensibility to shame, and the yearning towards perfection. It is the elasticity of the watch-spring that renders it the essential principle to the mechanism of the watch; but elasticity is only the property of solid bodies to recover, after yielding to pressure, their former shape. The mind which retains to the last youth's quick susceptibility to disgrace and to glory, retains to the last the power to resume the shape that it wore in youth. Cynicism is old at twenty. Impudence has no elasticity. If you care no more

than the grasshopper for the favour of gods and the reverence of men, your heart has the age of Tithonus, though your cheek have the bloom of Achilles. But if, even alone in your room or a desert, you could still blush or turn pale at the thought of a stain on your honour — if your crest still could rise, your pulse quicken, at the flash of some noble thought or brave deed — then you have the heart of Achilles, though at the age of Tithonus. There is a certain august shamefacedness — the Romans called it *PUDOR* — which, under hairs white as snow, preserves the aspect of youth to all personations of honour, of valour, of genius.

ESSAY VII.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF MONEY.

(ADDRESSED CHIEFLY TO THE YOUNG.)

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF MONEY.

(ADDRESSED CHIEFLY TO THE YOUNG.)

IN a work of fiction I once wrote this sentence, which perhaps may be found, if considered, suggestive of some practical truths, — "Money is character."

In the humbler grades of life, certainly character is money. The man who gives me his labour in return for the wages which the labour is worth, pledges to me something more than his labour — he pledges to me certain qualities of his moral being — such as honesty, sobriety, and diligence. If, in these respects, he maintain his character, he will have my money as long as I want his labour; and, when I want his labour no longer, his character is money's worth to him from somebody else. If, in addition to the moral qualities I have named, he establish a character for other attributes which have their own price in the money market — if he exhibit a superior intelligence, skill, energy, zeal — his labour rises in value. Thus, in the humblest class of life, character is money; and according as the man earns or spends the money, money in turn becomes character.

As money is the most evident power in the world's uses, so the use that he makes of money is often all that the world knows about a man. Is our money

gained justly and spent prudently? our character establishes a claim on respect. Is it gained nobly and spent beneficently? our character commands more than respect — it wins a place in that higher sphere of opinion which comprises admiration, gratitude, love. Is money, inherited without merit of ours, lavished recklessly away? our character disperses itself with the spray of the golden shower, — it is not the money alone of which we are spendthrifts. Is money meanly acquired, selfishly hoarded? it is not the money alone of which we are misers; we are starving our own human hearts — depriving them of their natural aliment in the approval and affection of others. We invest the money which we fancy so safe out at compound interest, in the very worst possession a man can purchase — viz., an odious reputation. In fact, the more we look round, the more we shall come to acknowledge that there is no test of a man's character more generally adopted than the way in which his money is managed. Money is a terrible blab; she will betray the secrets of her owner whatever he do to gag her. His virtues will creep out in her whisper — his vices she will cry aloud at the top of her tongue.

But the management of money is an art? True, but that which we call an art means an improvement, and not a deterioration, of a something existent already in nature; and the artist can only succeed in improving his art in proportion as he improves himself in the qualities which the art demands in the artist. Now the management of money is, in much, the management of self. If heaven allotted to each man seven guardian angels, five of them, at least, would be found night and day hovering over his pockets.

On the first rule of the art of managing money all preceptors must be agreed. It is told in three words — "Horror of Debt."

Nurse, cherish, never cavil away, the wholesome horror of DEBT. Personal liberty is the paramount essential to human dignity and human happiness. Man hazards the condition, and loses the virtues, of freeman, in proportion as he accustoms his thoughts to view, without anguish and shame, his lapse into the bondage of debtor. Debt is to man what the serpent is to the bird; its eye fascinates, its breath poisons, its coil crushes sinew and bone, its jaw is the pitiless grave. If you mock my illustration, if you sneer at the truth it embodies, give yourself no further trouble to learn how to manage your money. Consider yourself doomed; pass on your way with a jaunty step; the path is facile — paths to Avernus always are. But if, while I write, your heart, true to the instinct of manhood, responds to my words — if you say, "Agreed; that which you call the first rule for the management of money, I hold yet more imperative as the necessity to freedom and the lifespring of probity" — then advance on your way, assured that wherever it wind it must ascend. You see but the temple of Honour; close behind it is the temple of Fortune. You will pass through the one to the other.

"But," sighs the irresolute youth whom the eye of the serpent has already charmed, "it is by no means so easy to keep out of debt as it is to write warnings against getting into it."

Easy to keep out of debt! Certainly not. Nothing in life worth an effort is easy. Do you expect to know the first six books of Euclid by inspiration? Could

you get over that problem in the first book, popularly called the Ass's Bridge, without a sigh of fatigue? Can you look back to the rudimentary agonies of the Multiplication Table and the Rule of Three, or *As in presenti*, or even *Propria quæ maribus*, without a lively reminiscence of the moment in which you fairly gave in, and said, "This is too much for human powers"? Even in things the pleasantest, if we wish to succeed we must toil. We are all Adam's children. Whatever we culture on earth, till we win back our way into Eden, we must earn by the sweat of our brow or the sweat of our brain. Not even the Sybarite was at ease on his rosebed — even for him some labour was needful. No hand save his own could uncrumple the rose-leaf that chafed him. Each object under the sun reflects a difficulty on the earth. "Every hair," says that exquisite Publius Syrus, whose fragments of old verse are worth libraries of modern comedies — "every hair casts its shadow."

But think, O young man! of the object I place before you, and then be ashamed of yourself if you still sigh, "Easy to preach, and not easy to practise." I have no interest in the preaching; your interest is immense in the practice. That object not won, your heart has no peace, and your hearth no security. Your conscience itself leaves a door open night and day to the tempter; — night and day, to the ear of a debtor, steal whispers that prompt to the deeds of a felon. Three years ago you admired the rising success of some — most respectable man. Where is he now? In the dock, — in the jail, — in the hulks? What! that opulent banker, whose plate dazzled princes! or that flourishing clerk, who drove the high-stepping horse to his office? The

same. And his crime? Fraud and swindling. What demon could urge so respectable a man to so shameful an act? I know not the name of the demon, but the cause of the crime the wretch tells you himself. Ask him: what is his answer? "I got into debt, — no way to get out of it but the way which I took — to the dock, to the jail, to the hulks!"

Easy to keep out of debt! No, my young friend, it is difficult. Are you rich? The bland tradesman cries, "Pay when you please." Your rents or your father's allowance will not be due for three months; your purse, in the meanwhile, cannot afford you some pleasant vice or some innocent luxury, which to young heirs seems a want; you are about to relinquish the vice or dispense with the luxury: a charming acquaintance, who lives no one knows how, though no one lives better, introduces an amiable creature, sleek as a cat, with paws of velvet hiding claws of steel; his manners are pleasing, his calling — usury. You want the money for three months. Why say three; Your name to a bill for *six* months, and the vice or the luxury is yours the next hour! Certainly the easy thing here is to put your name to the bill. Presto! you are in debt — the demon has you down in his books.

Are you poor? Still your character is yet without stain — and your character is a property on which you can borrow a trifle. But when you borrow on your character, it is your character that you leave in pawn. The property to you is priceless, and the loan that subjects it to be a pledge unredeemed is — a trifle.

Young friend, be thou patrician or plebeian, learn

to say No at the first, to thy charming acquaintance. The worst that the "No" can inflict on thee is a privation — a want — always short of starvation. No young man, with the average health of youth, need be in danger of starving. But despite that privation or want, thy youth itself is such riches that there is not a purse-proud old millionaire of sixty who, provided thy good name be unsoiled, would not delightedly change with thee. Be contented! Say No! Keep unscathed the good name, keep out of peril the honour, without which even yon battered old soldier, who is hobbling into his grave on half-pay and a wooden leg, would not change with Achilles.

Here I pause, seemingly to digress, — really to enlarge the scope of my reasoning. In the world, around and without us, there are first principles which defy all philosophy. We may arrive with Newton at the law of gravitation; there we stop. "We inquire no more," says Sir William Hamilton, "although ignorant now as previously of the cause of gravitation."

But man in himself is a world; and in man's moral organisation there are also first principles, on which the more we would dispute the more likely we are to be led astray. All things can be argued upon; and therefore, if we so choose, we may be argued out of all things the best for us. There are some things for men and nations which it is safest never to submit to an argument. I would not, as an Englishman, permit trial by jury, or the right of *habeas corpus*, or the honour of the national flag, or the privilege of asylum to political exiles, to become open questions for the casuists of other lands to refine into ignorant prejudices on the part of my old-fashioned country.

So, as a human being, in myself integral and independent — as sovereign in free-will as any state on earth, however numerous its citizens, however imperial its sceptre, — there are certain things which I will not allow to be open questions; I assume them as indispensable to my own completeness of human being. I grant that a great deal may be said against them, as there may be against trial by jury and the honour of our flag; but I have made up my mind to maintain and not to discuss them, not because I doubt that all hostile arguments could be triumphantly answered, but because I may not be such a proficient in casuistry as to be able to satisfy others; and in striving to do so I may unsettle in my own mind the foundations of all that I know to be both the temples and bulwarks of my existence as man. I will not consent to make open questions of aught without which I should think it a mercy if I were hanged as a dog. I have read very subtle arguments against the probabilities that my frame holds a soul — that my present life involves a hereafter. I have read arguments no less subtle against the wisdom, and almost against the existence, of every conceivable virtue. I could quote pages by writers of no mean ability to show that common honesty is a vulgar error. So that, in fact, if I were to deliver up my whole self to the arbitrament of special pleaders, to-day I might be argued into an atheist, and to-morrow into a pickpocket. Therefore, I say to the young man about entering life as a free agent, Whenever you are tempted to do something which you have been brought up by honest parents and teachers to know to be wrong, do not argue about it — you can at least hold your tongue. Without an

argument you may commit the fault, repent, and atone it, because you have not frittered away the conviction that you have done wrong, but if you once make the wrong an open question, and consent to argue with perhaps a more practised casuist than yourself — his argument taking part with your temptation — then the chance is that you do more than a wrong thing; that you do wrong upon philosophical system, and will very soon substitute custom for conscience. Never be argued out of your soul, never be argued out of your honour, and never be argued into believing that soul and honour do not run a terrible risk if you limp into life with the load of a debt on your shoulders, and, as the debt grows heavy and heavier, the hiss of some lying fiend in your ear, — “Shake it off; you need not be bankrupt; there is an alternative.” — “O heavens! what alternative, say!” and the fiend whispers low, suasive words — for the fiends argue well — suasive words which, put in plain English, mean this, — “Be a cheat; be a swindler.”

Shake hands, brave young friend; we are agreed. You consent to have horror of debt. You will abstain, you will pinch, you will work harder, and harder, and harder if needful. You will not slink through the crowd as a debtor.

Now comes the next danger. You will not incur debt for yourself; but you have a friend. Pythias, your friend, your familiar — the man you like best and see most of — says to you, “Damon, be my security — your name to this bill!” Heaven forbid that I should cry out to Damon, “Pythias means to cheat thee — beware!” But I address to Damon this observation, “Pythias asks thee to guarantee that three, six, or

twelve months hence he will pay to another man — say to Dionysius — so many pounds sterling." Here your first duty as an honest man is not to Pythias, but to Dionysius. Suppose some accident happen — one of those accidents which however impossible it may seem to your Pythias, constantly happen to the Pythiases of other Damons who draw bills on the bank of Futurity; suppose that the smut or the rain spoil the crops on which Pythias relies — or the cargoes he expects from Marseilles, California, Utopia, go down to the bottomless seas; — Dionysius must come upon you! Can you pay to Dionysius what you pledge yourself to pay to him in spite of those accidents? He thinks those accidents not only possible, but probable, or he would not require your surety, nor charge 20 per cent for his loan; and, therefore, since he clearly doubts Pythias, his real trust is in you. Do you merit the trust? Can you pay the money if Pythias cannot? — and, allowing that you can pay the money, are your other obligations in life such as to warrant that sacrifice to Friendship? If you cannot pay, or if you owe it to others more sacred than Pythias himself — owe it to your parents, your plighted bride or wedded wife, or the children to whom, what, before their birth, was your fortune, has become the trust-money for their provision — not to hazard for Pythias that for which, if lost, not you alone but others must suffer, — then, do not common duty and common honesty forbid you to become surety to Pythias for an obligation which it belongs not to Pythias but to Chance to fulfil? I am the last man to say, "Do not help your friend," if you honourably can. If we have money, we manage it ill when we cannot help a

friend at a pinch. But the plain fact is this, Pythias wants money. Can you give it, at whatever stint to yourself, in justice to others? If you can, and you value Pythias more than the money, give the money, and there is an end of it; but if you cannot give the money, don't sign the bill. Do not become what, in rude truth, you do become — a knave and a liar — if you guarantee to do what you know that you cannot do should the guarantee be exacted. He is generous who gives; he who lends may be generous also; but only on one condition — viz., that he can afford to give what he can afford to lend; of the two, therefore, it is safer, friendlier, cheaper, in the long-run, to give than to lend. Give, and you may keep your friend if you lose your money; lend, and the chances are, that you lose your friend if ever you get back your money.

But if you do lend, let it be with the full conviction that the loan is a gift, and count it among the rarest favours of Providence if you be ever repaid. Lend to Pythias on the understanding, — "This is a loan if you can ever repay me. I shall, however, make this provision against the chance of a quarrel between us, that if you cannot repay me, it stands as a gift."

And whatever you lend, let it be your money, and not your name. Money you may get again, and, if not, you may contrive to do without it; name once lost you cannot get again, and, if you can contrive to do without it, you had better never have been born.

With honour, poverty is a Noble; without honour, wealth is a Pauper. Is it not so? Every young man not corrupted says "Yes." It is only some wretched

old cynic, no drop of warm blood in his veins, who says, "Life is a boon without honour."

But if a Jew knock at your door, and show you a bill with your name as a promise to pay, and the bill be dishonoured, pray, what becomes of your name?

"My name!" falters Damon; "I am but a surety — go to Pythias."

"Pythias has bolted!"

Pay the bill, Damon, or good-bye to your honour!

Pardon my prolixity; earnestness is apt to be garrulous. *Vixi!* I have lived and known life. And, alas! what careers bright in promise I have seen close in jail or in exile; what talents, profuse in their blossom, die off without coming to fruit; what virtues the manliest rot into vices the meanest — which, when one cried in amazement, "How account for so doleful an end to so fair a commencement?" — solve their whole mystery in this: "Damon never recovered his first fatal error; Damon put his name to a bill by which Pythias promised to pay so and so in three months."

Having settled these essential preliminaries — 1st, Never to borrow where there is a chance, however remote, that you may not be able to repay; 2dly, Never to lend what you are not prepared to give; 3dly, Never to guarantee for another what you cannot fulfil if the other should fail; — you start in life with this great advantage — whatever you have, be it little or much, is your own. Rich or poor, you start as a freeman, resolved to preserve, in your freedom, the noblest condition of your being as man.

Now, fix your eyes steadily on some definite end in the future. Consider well what you chiefly wish

to be; then compute at the lowest that which you are by talent, and at the highest that which you can be by labour. Always under-estimate the resources of talent; always put as against you the chances of luck. Then set down on the other side, as against talent defective, against luck adverse, all that which can be placed to the credit of energy, patience, perseverance. These last are infinite; whatever be placed against them is finite; you are on the right side of any system of book-keeping by double-entry, on which a mortal may presume to calculate accounts with Fate.

The finest epithet for genius is that which was applied to Newton's genius, "patient." He who has patience coupled with energy is sure, sooner or later, to obtain the results of genius; he who has genius without patience, and without energy (if indeed such genius be a thing possible), might as well have no genius at all. His works and aims, like the plants of Nature before the Deluge, are characterised by the slightness of their roots.

Fortune is said to be blind, but her favourites never are. Ambition has the eye of the eagle — Prudence that of the lynx; the first looks through the air — the last along the ground.

The man who succeeds above his fellows is the one who, early in life, clearly discerns his object, and towards that object habitually directs his powers. Thus, indeed, even genius itself is but fine observation strengthened by fixity of purpose. Every man who observes vigilantly and resolves steadfastly, grows unconsciously into genius.

Assuming that fortune be your object, let your first efforts be not for wealth, but independence. Whatever

be your talents, whatever your prospects, never be tempted to speculate away, on the chance of a palace, that which you need as a provision against the work-house. Youth is too apt to exclaim, "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus.*" But that saying was only for a Cæsar; and even for him it was not a wise one. To a Cæsar there should have been no *Aut*. Nemesis sighed "*Aut nullus,*" when Cæsar fell at the feet of the marble Pompey.

A daring trader hazards the halter if he says, "Rothschild or nothing;" a philosopher will end as a charlatan if he says, "Aristotle or nothing;" a gentleman who says, "Sir Philip Sydney or nothing," is on the eve of becoming a blackleg. The safe maxim is this, "The highest I can be, but on no account — *nullus.*"

Let your first care be, then, independence. Without pecuniary independence you are not even intellectually free; with independence, even though it be gained through some occupation which you endure as a drudgery, still, out of the twenty-four hours, there will be always some hours for the occupation in which you delight.

This observation applies in fullest force to aspirants in literature. It is my cruel fate to receive no unfrequent communications from youths whose calling is that of the counter, whose tastes are those of Parnassus; and the pith of these unsolicited communications is invariably this: —

"I gain so many shillings a-week by a vulgar and detestable trade; but I have a soul above buttons. Read the MSS. I enclose. Do you not think there is some merit in them? Could I not succeed as an

author? I have had disadvantages to encounter — so had Burns! I cannot boast of a scholastic education; I have had very little leisure to educate myself; still," — *et cetera, et cetera*, all the *et cetera* involving the same question, — "As I am unfit to be an apprentice, am I not fit to be an author? Not having enough of human intelligence, perseverance, and energy to excel as a hatter, a tailor, a butcher, a baker, may I not be a Walter Scott or a Byron?"

Useless — I solemnly warn all such contingent correspondents as may now be looming ominously among other unwelcome clouds that menace my few holiday hours — useless to apply to me. Be the specimens of genius under difficulties, thus volunteered to my eye, good, bad, or indifferent, my answer, as an honest man, can be only this, "Keep to the calling that assures you a something out of which you may extract independence — until you are independent. Give to that calling all your heart, all your mind. If I were hatter, or tailor, or butcher, or baker, I should resolve to consider my calling the best in the world, and devote to it the best of my powers. Independence once won, then be Byron or Scott if you can."

Independence! independence! the right and the power to follow the bent of your genius without fear of the bailiff and dun, should be your first inflexible aim. To attain independence, so apportion your expenditure as to spend less than you have or you earn. Make this rule imperative. I know of none better. Lay by something every year, if it be but a shilling. A shilling laid by, net and clear from a debt, is a receipt in full for all claims in the past, and you go on with light foot and light heart to the future. "How

am I to save and lay by?" saith the author, or any other man of wants more large than his means. The answer is obvious — "If you cannot increase your means, then you must diminish your wants." Every skilled labourer of fair repute can earn enough not to starve, and a surplus beyond that bare sufficiency. Yet many a skilled labourer suffers more from positive privation than the unskilled rural peasant. Why? Because he encourages wants in excess of his means.

A man of £300 a-year, living up to that income, truly complains of poverty; but if he live at the rate of £250 a-year, he is comparatively rich. "Oh," says Gentility, "but I must have this or that, which necessitates the yearly £50 you ask me to save — I must be genteel." Why that must? That certain folks may esteem you? Believe me they esteem you much more for a balance at your banker's than for that silver teapot or that mannikin menial in sugar-loaf buttons. "But," says Parental Affection, "I must educate my boy; that £50 saved from my income is the cost of his education." Is it so? Can all the schoolmasters in Europe teach him a nobler lesson than that of a generous thrift, a cheerful and brave self-denial? If the £50 be really the sum which the boy's schooling needs, and you can spare nothing else from your remaining £250, still save and lay by for a year, and during that year let the boy study at home, by seeing how gladly you all are saving for him. Then the next year the schooling is the present which you all — father, mother, and sister — by many slight acts of self-denial, have contrived to make to your boy. And it he be a boy of good heart, a boy such as parents so thoughtful nearly always rear, he will go to

his school determined to make up to you for all the privations which he has seen those he loves endure for his sake.

You may tell me that practically it comes to the same thing, for the school goes on, and next year you must equally pinch for the £50. True; but there is this mighty difference, you are a year in advance of the sum; and, the habit of saving thus formed, you may discover something else that will bear a retrenchment. He who has saved for one year finds the security, pleasure, and pride in it a luxury so great that his invention will be quickened to keep it. Lay by! lay by! What makes the capital of nations? Savings: nothing else. Neither nations nor men are safe against fortune, unless they can hit on a system by which they save more than they spend. When that system is once established, at what a ratio capital accumulates! What resources the system gradually develops! In that one maxim is the secret of England's greatness! Do you think it mean to save more than you spend? You do in that what alone gives your country its rank in the universe. The system so grand for an empire cannot be mean for a citizen.

Well, we have now added another rule to the canons prescribed to the Management of Money: — save more than you spend. Whatever your means be, so apportion your wants that your means may exceed them. Every man who earns but ten shillings a-week can do this if he please, whatever he may say to the contrary; for if he can live upon ten shillings a-week, he can live upon nine and elevenpence.

In this rule mark the emphatic distinction between poverty and neediness. Poverty is relative, and there-

fore not ignoble; Neediness is a positive degradation. If I have only £100 a-year, I am rich as compared with the majority of my countrymen. If I have £5000 a-year, I may be poor compared with the majority of my associates; and very poor compared to my next-door neighbour. With either of these incomes I am relatively poor or rich; but with either of these incomes I may be positively needy, or positively free from neediness. With the £100 a-year I may need no man's help: I may at least have "my crust of bread and liberty." But with £5000 a-year I may dread a ring at my bell; I may have my tyrannical masters in servants whose wages I cannot pay; my exile may be at the fiat of the first long-suffering man who enters a judgment against me; for the flesh that lies nearest to my heart some Shylock may be dusting his scales and whetting his knife. Nor is this an exaggeration. Some of the neediest men I ever knew have a nominal £5000 a-year. Every man is needy who spends more than he has; no man is needy who spends less. I may so ill manage my money that, with £5000 a-year, I purchase the worst evils of poverty — terror and shame; I may so well manage my money that, with £100 a-year, I purchase the best blessings of wealth — safety and respect. Man is a kingly animal. In every state which does not enslave him, it is not labour which makes him less royally lord of himself — it is fear.

"Rex est qui metuit nihil,
Et hoc regnum sibi quisque det."

Money is character — money also is power. I have power not in proportion to the money I spend on myself, but in proportion to the money I can, if I please,

give away to another. We feel this as we advance in years. How helpless is an old man who has not a farthing to give or to leave! But be moderately amiable, grateful, and kind, and, though you have neither wife nor child, you will never want a wife's tenderness nor a child's obedience if you have something to leave or to give. This reads like satire; it is sober truth.

But now we arrive at the power of money well managed. You have got money — you have it; and, with it, the heart, and the sense, and the taste to extract from the metal its uses. Talk of the power of knowledge! What can knowledge invent that money cannot purchase? Money, it is true, cannot give you the brain of the philosopher, the eye of the painter, the ear of the musician, nor that inner sixth sense of beauty and truth by which the poet unites, in himself, philosopher, painter, musician; but money can refine and exalt your existence with all that philosopher, painter, musician, poet, accomplish. That which they are your wealth cannot make you; but that which they do is at the command of your wealth. You may collect in your libraries all thoughts which all thinkers have confided to books; your galleries may teem with the treasures of art; the air that you breathe may be vocal with music; better than all, when you summon the Graces they can come to your call in their sweet name of Charities. You can build up asylums for age, and Academies for youth. Pining Merit may spring to hope at your voice, and "Poverty grow cheerful in your sight." Money well managed deserves, indeed, the apotheosis to which she was raised by her Latin adorers; she is *Diva Moneta* — a Goddess.

I have said that he who sets out in life with the

resolve to acquire money, should place clearly before him some definite object to which the money is but the means. He thus sweetens privation and dignifies thrift. Money never can be well managed if sought solely through the greed of money for its own sake. In all meanness there is a defect of intellect as well as of heart. And even the cleverness of avarice is but the cunning of imbecility.

The first object connected with money is the security for individual freedom — pecuniary independence. That once gained, whatever is surplus becomes the fair capital for reproductive adventure. Adhere but to this rule in every speculation, however tempting: preserve free from all hazard that which you require to live on without depending upon others.

It is a great motive to economy, a strong safeguard to conduct, and a wonderful stimulant to all mental power, if you can associate your toil for money with some end dear to your affections. I once knew a boy of good parts, but who seemed incorrigibly indolent. His father, a professional man, died suddenly, leaving his widow and son utterly destitute. The widow resolved to continue the education of her boy, however little he had hitherto profited by it — engaged herself as teacher at a school, and devoted her salary to her son. From that moment the boy began to work in good earnest. He saw the value of money in this world; he resolved to requite his mother — to see her once more in a home of her own; he distinguished himself at school; he obtained, at the age of sixteen, an entry in a mercantile house. At the age of twenty his salary enabled him to place his mother in a modest suburban lodging, to which he came home every night.

At the age of thirty he was a rich man, and, visiting him at his villa, I admired his gardens. He said to me, simply, "I have no taste for flowers myself, but my mother is passionately fond of them. I date my first step in life from my resolve to find her a home; and the invention in my business to which I owe my rise from a clerk to a partner could never have come into my brain, and been patiently worked out, if, night and day, I had not thought of my mother's delight in flowers."

A common motive with a young man is an honest love for the girl whom he desires to win as his wife. Nay, if no such girl yet has been met on the earth, surely she lives for him in the cloudland of Fancy. Wedlock, and wedlock for love, is the most exquisite hope in the innermost heart of every young man who labours; it is but the profligate idlers who laugh at that sacred ideal. But it is only the peasant or mechanic who has a right to marry on no other capital than that which he takes from nature in sinews and thews. The man whose whole condition of being is in his work from day to day, must still have his helpmate. He finds his helpmate in one who can work like himself if his honest industry fail her. I preach to the day-labourer no cold homilies from political economy. The happiness and morality of the working class necessitate early marriages; and for prudent provision against the chances of illness and death there are benefit clubs and societies, which must stand in lieu of jointure and settlement. But to men of a higher grade in this world's social distinctions, Hymen must generally contrive to make some kind of compromise with Plutus. I grant that your fond Amaryllis

would take your arm to the altar, though you have not a coat to your back; but Amaryllis may have parents, who not unreasonably ask, "How, young Strephon, can you maintain our daughter? — and if your death demolish all those castles in the air, which you are now building without brick and mortar, under what roof will she lay her head?"

And suppose that no parents thus unkindly interpose between Amaryllis and you, still it is a poor return to the disinterested love of Amaryllis, to take her, thoughtless child, at her word. Amaryllis proves her unselfish love; prove yours, my friend Strephon. Wait — hope — strive — her ring is on your finger; her picture, though it be but a villanous photograph, hangs by your bedside; her image is safe in the innermost fold of your heart. Wait till you can joyously say, "Come, Amaryllis; Plutus relaxes his frown; here is a home which, if humble, at least is secure; and, if death suddenly snatch me away, here is no castle in air for my widow. Amaryllis shall never live upon alms!"

How your love will deepen and strengthen in that generous delay; and with your love, how your whole nature, mental and moral, will deepen and strengthen! Here, indeed, is an object for climbing the rough paths on to fortune; and here the first friendly opposition of Plutus only serves to place upon surer foundations the blessings promised by Hymen. Constancy in love necessitates patience and perseverance in all efforts for fortune; and, with patience and perseverance, a man of fair average capacities is the master of fortune.

But there are lesser objects than those I have de-

finest as the most frequently coveted, which lend a charm to the making of money.

It is a motive to economy, and a dissuasion from many profitless follies, to cherish early in life one favourite hobby, provided the hobby be sound and well-bred.

The taste for books, and the desire to collect them, are no mean tests of a schoolboy's career as man.

One of the most distinguished personages in Europe, showing me his library — which is remarkable for its extent and its quality (it was formed on the principle of including all works that treat, directly or indirectly, on the human mind, and thus necessarily includes almost every book worth reading) — said to me: "Not only this collection, but my social successes in life, I trace back to the first franc I saved from the cake-shop to spend on the book-stall. When I was a young man, and received an invitation to a ball, not being then rich, I calculated what it would cost me in kid gloves and coach-hire, and, refusing the ball, bought a book with the money. The books I bought I read; the books I read influenced my career." Perhaps this eminent person might have thought of the balls thus refused in his early youth when, being still young, he gave his own first ball as prime minister.

But hobbies should be wives, not mistresses. It will not do to have more than one at a time. One hobby leads you out of extravagance; a team of hobbies you cannot drive till you are rich enough to find corn for them all. Few men are rich enough for that.

In the management of money, there are some things we do for show — wisely if we can afford it. Money is station as well as character and power.

In matters of show, it is better to have one decided success than fifty expensive failures. Better to have one first-rate picture in a modest drawing-room than fifty daubs in a pompous gallery. Better to have one handsome horse in a brougham than four screws in a drag. Better to give one pleasant tea-party than a dozen detestable dinners.

A man of very moderate means can generally afford one effect meant for show, as a requisite of station, which, of its kind, may not be surpassed by a millionaire. Those who set the fashions in London are never the richest people. Good taste is intuitive with some persons, but it may be acquired by all who are observant. In matters of show, good taste is the elementary necessity; after good taste, concentration of purpose. With money as with genius, the wise master of his art says, "There is one thing I can do well; that one thing I will do as well as I can." Money, like genius, is effective in proportion as it is brought to bear on one thing at a time. Money, like genius, may comprehend success in a hundred things — but still, as a rule, one thing at a time; that thing must be completed or relinquished before you turn to another.

For a young man of a gentleman's station and a cadet's income, the only show needed is that which probably pleases himself the most — the effect produced by his own personal appearance. Dress will therefore not unreasonably, and by no means frivolously, demand some of his thoughts and much of his money. To the station of a young aspirant of fashion in the polite world, who is known not to be rich, it matters nothing what he pays for his lodging: he can

always give his address at a club or hotel. No one cares how much or how little he pays for his dinner. No fine lady inquires if he calls at her house on foot or in a carriage. But society expects him to dress as much like a gentleman as if he were a young duke; and, fortunately, as young dukes nowadays do not wear gold lace and miniver, this is no unreasonable exaction on the part of society. A gentleman's taste in dress is, upon principle, the avoidance of all things extravagant. It consists in the quiet simplicity of exquisite neatness; but, as the neatness must be a neatness in fashion, employ the best tailor; pay him ready money, and on the whole you will find him the cheapest.

Still, if a young man of the gay world means to do the best that he can for his person, and really does obtain a certain rank or repute should it be only said of him that he is extremely well dressed, he will remember that no man in great capitals, without pre-eminent claims of fortune, birth, or beauty, ever really finds a place in *haut ton* without some cultivation of mind. All the men I have ever known, who have lifted themselves into authority in the inner circles of fashion, have been men of considerable intellectual accomplishment. They have either had wit or humour to a fine degree, or admirably strong sense and judgment, or keen penetration into character; they have been, from qualities far below the surface, either charming or instructive companions.

Mere dandies are but cut flowers in a bouquet — once faded, they can never reblossom. In the drawing-room, as everywhere else, Mind in the long-run prevails. And, O well-booted Achaian! for all those sub-

stantial good things which money well managed commands, and which, year after year as you advance in life, you will covet and sigh for, — yon sloven, thick-shoed and with cravat awry — whose mind, as he hurries by the bow-window at White's, sows each fleeting moment with thoughts which grow not blossoms for bouquets but corn-sheaves for garners — will, before he is forty, be far more the fashion than you. He is commanding the time out of which you are fading. And time, O my friend, is money! time wasted can never conduce to money well managed.

ESSAY VIII

ON RHYTHM IN PROSE, AS CONDUCTIVE TO PRECISION
AND CLEARNESS.

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IN every good prose-writer there will be found a certain harmony of sentence, which cannot be displaced without injury to his meaning. His own ear has accustomed itself to regular measurements of time, to which his thoughts learn mechanically to regulate their march. And in prose, as in verse, it is the pause, be it long or short, which the mind is compelled to make, in order to accommodate its utterance to the ear, that serves to the completer formation of the ideas conveyed; for words, like waters, would run off to their own waste were it not for the checks that compress them. Water-pipes can only convey their stream so long as they resist its pressure, and every skilled workman knows that he cannot expect them to last unless he smooth, with care, the material of which they are composed. For reasons of its own, prose has therefore a rhythm of its own.

But by rhythm I do not necessarily mean the monotonous rise and fall of balanced periods, nor the amplification of needless epithets, in order to close the cadence with a Johnsonian chime. Every style has its appropriate music; but without a music of some kind it is not style — it is scribbling. And even when we

take those writers of the last century in whom the taste of the present condemns an over-elaborate care for sound, we shall find that the sense which they desire to express, so far from being sacrificed to sound, is rendered with singular distinctness; a merit which may be reasonably ascribed, in great part, to the increased attention with which the mind revolves its ideas, in its effort to harmonise their utterance. For all harmony necessitates method; and the first principle of method is precision.

In some exquisite critical hints on "Eurhythmy," Goethe remarks, "that the best composition in pictures is that which, observing the most delicate laws of harmony, so arranges the objects that they by their position tell their own story." And the rule thus applied to composition in painting, applies no less to composition in literature.

In metaphysical works, the writers most conspicuous for harmony of style are those in whom the meaning is most clear from misconception. Thus Hume, the subtlest of all our metaphysicians, is the one whose theories have been the least obscure to his commentators or disciples; for his theories themselves led him to consult, in "every combination of syllables or letters,"* that euphony which, by pleasing the ear (or, through sympathy, the eye that "runs over the book"), allures the attention of the mind, and, while it increases the lucidity of the author by the deliberation with which he selects his expressions, quickens the intelligence of the reader by the charm that lightens the fatigue of its tension; whereas the meaning of Locke is often made needlessly difficult by the ruggedness of

* Hume, 'Why Utility pleases.'

his style, and many of the erroneous deductions which his followers have drawn from his system may be traced to the want of that verbal precision which a due culture of euphony seldom fails to bestow.

Much has been said, with justice, against the peculiar modes of euphony elaborated by Johnson and Gibbon; too pompous and grandiose; too remote from our homely vernacular: granted. But that does not prove the care for euphony to be a fault; it only proves that the modes of euphony favoured by those illustrious writers were too perceptibly artificial to be purely artistic. Yet no critic can say that Johnson and Gibbon are obscure; their meaning is much plainer than that of many a writer who prefers a colloquial diction. Not only in spite of the fault, but because of the fault, we impute to their styles, Johnson and Gibbon are — Johnson and Gibbon. And if you reformed their rhythm to simpler modulations, accordant to your own critical canons, they would no more be Johnson and Gibbon, than Pope and Gray would be Pope and Gray if you reconstructed the "Essay on Man" on the theories of Wordsworth; or, by the ruthless excision of redundant epithets, sought, with Goldsmith, to improve the dirge of the 'Elegy' into the jig of a ballad.

It is not, then, that rhythm should be cultivated only for the sake of embellishment, but also for the sake of perspicuity; the culture of rhythm in prose defeats its own object, and results in obscurity, if it seek to conceal poverty of thought by verbal decorations. Its uses, on the contrary, are designed for severe thinkers, though its charm may be insensibly felt by the most ordinary reader, — its uses are based

on the common-sense principle, that the more the mind is compelled to linger on the thought, the more the thought itself is likely to emerge, clear and distinct, in the words which it ultimately selects: so metals, opaque in the mass, are made translucent by the process of solution.

ESSAY IX.

ON STYLE AND DICTION.

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THERE is a great distinction between the art of style and what the phrenologists call "the organ of language." In Jeremy Taylor, for instance, we are dazzled by the opulent splendour of diction with which the preacher comes in state to our souls. High priest of eloquence, to his sacred tiara the many royalties of genius contribute the richest gems of their crowns. But no teacher of style would recommend as a safe model to his pupil the style of Jeremy Taylor. Still more noticeable are the absolute command, and the exquisite selection, of words in Sir Thomas Browne. Milton himself, in the 'Lycidas' or 'Comus,' has scarcely a more curious felicity of phrase, a more dulcet arrangement of sound, than the 'Essay upon Urn Burial' displays in its musical prose. Yet who would contend that the style of Sir Thomas Browne was that of pure classical English? Attempt to imitate the 'Urn Burial,' and you fall into quaint affectation.

I know not if any of his contemporaries, mighty prose-writers though they were, had, on the whole, so subtle and fine a perception of the various capacities of our language as the author of 'Tristram Shandy.' With what finger — how light and how strong — he flies over the keys of the instrument! What delicate

elegance he can extract from words the most colloquial and vulgar; and again, with some word unfamiliar and strange, how abruptly he strikes on the universal chords of laughter. He can play with the massive weights of our language as a juggler plays with his airy balls. In an age when other grand writers were squaring their periods by rule and compass, he flings forth his jocund sentences loose and at random; now up towards the stars, now down into puddles; yet how they shine where they soar, and how lightly rebound when they fall! But I should have small respect for the critic who advised the youthful author to emulate the style of Sterne. Only writers the most practised could safely venture an occasional, restrained, imitation, of his frolicsome zoneless graces.

On the other hand, no praise of Addison's style can exaggerate its merits. Its art is perfectly marvellous. No change of time can render the workmanship obsolete. His style has that nameless urbanity in which we recognise the perfection of manner — courteous, but not courtierlike; so dignified, yet so kindly; so easy, yet so highbred. Its form of English is fixed — a safe and eternal model, of which all imitation pleases — to which all approach is scholarship — like the Latin of the Augustan age. Yet I know not whether we could justly say that Addison possessed a very extensive command of language; certainly not a command equal to that of the writers I have just named. His jewels are admirably set, but they are not of the largest size, nor of the most precious water.

Of Goldsmith we may say much the same. His idea of the beauties compatible with chastity of style was limited, but he realised his own idea with ex-

quisite finish of execution. And there is no English writer, Addison alone excepted, to whose lucid periods, always elegant and never effeminate, a young man of genius, desiring to form a style attractive alike to scholars and the populace, should more sedulously devote his days and nights.

But there are standards of heroic achievement which are seldom attained without many bold errors in the trial — errors not incurred by those who are contented with standards of less lofty elevation. We may guess at once where Goldsmith would fail in the rarer beauties of language, when we find him rebuking the muse of Gray for that luxuriance of epithet which made its characteristic embellishment. From a treasury of poetic expression, enriched by a learning as copious as Johnson's, and selected by a taste more comprehensive than Goldsmith's, Gray extracted those jewels of phrase which render his verse original by the inimitable arrangement of its spoils. He is among poets what Cellini is among artists; ornament is less the accessory grace than the essential merit of his designs.

Lord Bolingbroke's Political Essays, and many of his letters in familiar correspondence, are often admirable alike for arrangement of style and richness of language. And his mode of composition is in singular accordance with the nature of his subjects and the dignity of his station. He was a patrician statesman, and in treating of state affairs he speaks with authority, and not as the scribes — "*Quodam modo, præ se ferens in dicendo nobilitatem suam.*"* His irony is majestic, his lamentations are reserved and masculine. His graces of language are those which become an accomplished

* Quintilian, in describing the oratory of Messala.

statesman. He is not a poet, and he takes from poets no ornaments obsolete or far-fetched. He assumes to be a man who has brought into active life the love of letters; like the English friend of Rousseau's St. Preux, "he has been conducted to philosophy through the path of the passions." His quotations and his images harmonise with the character he assumes. His similes and illustrations are no wanton enrichments of fancy; they support the argument they adorn — like buttresses which, however relieved with tracery, add an air of solidity to the building against which they lean, and, in leaning, prop. Withal, he has been a man of the world's hard business — a leader of party, a chief among the agencies by which opinion is moulded and action is controlled. And therefore, amidst his natural stateliness, there is an absence of pedantry — a popular and genial elegance. His sentences flow loose as if disdainful of verbal care. Yet throughout all there reigns the senatorial decorum. The folds of the toga are not arranged to show off the breadth of the purple hem; the wearer knows too well that, however the folds may fall, the hem cannot fail to be seen.

Perhaps the charm of Bolingbroke's writings is in some degree caused by the interest which it is impossible to refuse to the peculiarities of his character and the vicissitudes of his life — an interest to which his very errors contribute, as they do to that which the human heart so mournfully yields to the infirmities of genius in Byron or Burns.

In this English Alcibiades, what restless, but what rich vitality! We first behold him, like his Athenian prototype, bounding into life, a beautiful ambitious youth, seizing on notoriety as a substitute for fame;

audacious in profligate excess — less, perhaps, from the riot of the senses, than from a wild joy in the scandal which singles him out for talk. Still but a stripling, he soon wrenches himself from so ignoble a corruption of the desire for renown. He disappears from the haunts that had rung with the turbulent follies of a boy — he expends his redundant activity in travel — and learns the current language of Europe to so nice a perfection, that, in later life, Voltaire himself acknowledges obligations to his critical knowledge of French.

He returns to England, enters Parliament at the age of twenty-two, and wins, as it were with a bound, the fame which a free state accords to the citizen in whom it hails the sovereign orator of his time. Nor of his own time alone. So far as we can judge by concurrent testimonies of great weight, Henry St. John was, perhaps, in point of effect upon his audience, the most brilliant and fascinating orator the English Parliament ever knew; Chesterfield, himself amongst the most accomplished of public speakers, and doing full justice to Chatham, to whom he ascribes “eloquence of every kind,” still commends Bolingbroke as the ideal model of the perfect orator. And Chatham must have accepted as truthful the traditions of his precursor’s eloquence, when he said he would rather win back from oblivion Lord Bolingbroke’s unreported speeches than Livy’s lost books — an opinion endorsed by the severer taste of a yet higher authority, Chatham’s son.

And how soon all this splendour is obscured! Queen Anne dies; and the councillor of Queen Anne is denounced as a traitor to King George. What a scene, for some high-bred novelist, might be laid in the theatre itself, the night in which Bolingbroke vanished from

the town he had dazzled and the country he had swayed! The playhouse is crowded; — all eyes turn to one box; — there sits serene the handsome young statesman whom, says Prior, “men respect, and women love” —

Curious tongues whisper — “But what is really the truth? Is there any proof against him? It is said the articles of impeachment are already drawn up; the Whigs are resolved to have his head. Tut, impossible! See how gaily he smiles at this moment! Who has just entered his box? — an express? Tut, only the manager. My lord has bespoken the play for to-morrow night.”

The curtain falls — falls darkly on an actor greater than any Burbage or Betterton that ever fretted his hour on the mimic stage. Where behind the scenes has my lord disappeared? He is a fugitive on the sea. Axe and headsman are baffled. Where next does my lord reappear? At the playhouse in Paris. All eyes there, as in London, are fixed on the handsome young statesman. And lo! even there, he is Minister of State — distrusted, melancholy minister of a crownless and timid Pretender! He who gave Europe the Peace of Utrecht — he who had supplied ammunition and arms to Marlborough, is an exile in the Court of the Bourbon, or rather in the mimic court of the Bourbon's pensioner, and plotting a buccaneer's foray on the shores of disdainful England. He has told us himself how soon that episode in his life came to a close; and if the cause he had espoused was a wrong one, we may include his mistake in the general amnesty long ago granted to Jacobites.

And now Alcibiades, in a new phase of multiform

genius, affects to be Socrates himself. King George has set a price on his head, and he sits quietly down to show that that head is worth a much higher price than the letterless Guelph has offered for it. From his secluded chateau in France he sends forth that marvellous pamphlet which secured to the silenced orator his rank amongst the highest of contemporaneous writers.*

This was, perhaps, really the happiest period of his life. Then, perhaps, he sincerely felt that august contempt for the gauds of ambition, which he laboured hard, but with imperfect success, to sustain through the length of days yet in store for the passionate would-be Stoic; for then he first knew the calm of a virtuous and genial Home. A very early marriage had proved unfortunate, and the triumphs of his official career had been embittered by domestic dissensions. The death of his first wife, shortly after his exile, allowed him to form nuptials more auspicious. The second Lady Bolingbroke, a Frenchwoman, appears to have been all that his heart had sought elsewhere in vain; accomplished, gentle, cheerful, tenderly devoted to him. To this amiable woman, so far as we know, his fidelity never swerved. With that marriage end all the anecdotes of his daring and lawless gallantry. And out of all the friends whom this once paramount chief of party had rallied round him, whom does he select to negotiate terms for his return to his native shores? What friend but the sweet second self? His trust is placed in the resolute heart and quick woman-wit of the faithful wife. Not the least interesting passage in the romance of his checkered career, is that where the

* The Letter to Sir William Windham.

plot of the drama shifts once more into Court comedy. Lady Bolingbroke, baffling all the shrewd arts of Sir Robert Walpole, entrapping the saturnine King with a golden bait set for the German gorgon who ruled him,* hastening back to her lord victorious, as Walpole, an hour too late, comes out of the royal closet foiled and discomfited. The Tories look up. The High Church smooths its band with decorous delight. Woe to Walpole and the Whigs! Lord Bolingbroke,

"The Senate's darling and the Church's pride,"

can return to England.

But Walpole is not so artless a spider as to be destroyed by a wasp, whatever its sting or its nippers. True, the wasp has broken one mesh of the web, but to that hole in the wall, wherein sits the spider despotic, the wasp never shall bring either nippers or sting. Lord Bolingbroke may return to England, but Lord Bolingbroke shall not re-enter the doors of Parliament. The voice of Achilles must not be heard from the ramparts on which his form reappears. Perhaps so signal a compliment was never yet paid to that eloquence by which Euripides tells us great States can be overturned.**

Lord Bolingbroke is now far advanced in middle age, but long years are yet before him. Lost to the Senate,

* The Duchess of Kendal. The price paid to this lady for her good offices is said to have been £11,000. — *Etough Papers*.

** Lord Bolingbroke's pardon passed the Great Seal in 1723. The bill which restored him to his title and estates passed in 1725. (Lady Bolingbroke visited England a second time to negotiate for this object with Lady Harcourt and the Duchess of Kendal.) The attainder was, however, kept up, lest, as Bolingbroke writes, "so corrupt a member should come again into the House of Lords, and his bad leaven should sour that sweet untainted mass."

his stately mournful image is seen distinct in the groves of Academe. He is still that "prodigy of parts" for whom the dark misanthropy of Swift softens into reverent affection. He is still that "lord of the silver bow," from whom Pulteney borrows his piercing shafts. He is still that "accomplished St. John," from whom Pope takes the theme and the argument of a poem unequalled in didactic solemnity and splendour, since Lucretius set to music the false creed of Epicurus. No Guelph and no Walpole can interdict genius from fame. But fame alone seldom comforts the man who has trained his mind from youth to the pursuit of power.

Throughout all Bolingbroke's Correspondence, though he seeks with no ignoble simulation to appear serene, his melancholy is intense. To ambition excluded from its fair field of living action, the gardens of philosophy, like those of the Homeric spectre-land, are landscapes without a sun.

But at last the sun itself, so radiant in the morn, so obscured in the noon and evening of his life, breaks faintly forth on eyes it can rejoice no more. Walpole at length has fallen. A new Ministry is formed, to whom the attainted traitor is a patriot martyr. A new generation has arisen, for whom the errors of one whose works have charmed their taste, whose sorrows have moved their hearts, are merged in renown or atoned by penance.

The Prince of Wales selects as his political teacher and councillor the man whose voice had been gagged, lest the throne of the Guelph should reel before the sound of its trumpet-peal. The sun rests upon slopes smoothed to the stride of ambition — if ambition has still heart and strength to renew the journey. But all

the old man, weary and worn out, now needs from earth, are six feet of mould never lit by the sun!

The day that he sank into the grave, critics might have predicted to his memory a popular and enduring honour among the names which adorn a nation; for his political faults were those which friends could well contrive to palliate, and foes well afford to excuse. True, he had desired and had schemed to place a Stuart on the throne yet held by a Stuart, and to give to Anne a successor in her brother, rather than in a German prince who could not speak a word of our language, and who has left us no cause to suspect that he ever said a wise or a good thing in his own. We are glad that in this Lord Bolingbroke failed; we can all now acknowledge that the welfare of England was best consulted by the exclusion of the former dynasty. But that Bolingbroke for a few months thought otherwise, is but to say that he thought with perhaps half his countrymen, since Walpole's only excuse for violating the Constitution by the Septennial Act, and suppressing opinion by corrupting its organs, is that, if England could have spoken out, there would have been a cry loud enough to have rent the land in twain, of "God save the King — on the other side of the water!" Bolingbroke's private errors in his earlier years had been long since cancelled by manners unimpeachably pure since the date of his second marriage. All that was before the world in the writings he had published, abounds in maxims as loftily moral as ever, under the Attic Portico, bade the soul take from Virtue an armour invulnerable to the shafts of Fortune. His political tenets were those which the soundest thinkers of this day tacitly adopt. Nothing has ever yet been written

more practically wise on the true interest of England in her relations to foreign states, than will be found in the numbers of the 'Occasional Writer,' which treat of "the Balance of Power;" nothing more nobly liberal than the old Tory chief's eloquent plea for the popular principle of Parliamentary representation and the purity of election ever emanated from a Reform Committee. And at the day of his death he was confessedly the finest prose-writer, both in thought and in form, that had yet devoted genius and learning to the warfare of party politics. But all these title-deeds to unquestionable repute he himself destroyed as ruthlessly as the Stuarts he had once served had destroyed their own to a less enviable throne. He had written, in the spleen of compulsory leisure, and at an age when reason was weakened and imagination dulled, a long, tedious, pointless, nerveless essay, or rather bundle of essays, intended to advance the morality of Deism against the religion of Christianity. Pope, in the graceful epigram which compliments Chesterfield, had said —

"Accept a miracle instead of wit,
See two dull lines by Stanhope's pencil writ."

But Bolingbroke, in his argument against miracles, is chastised by a phenomenon that might have seemed a miracle in himself. Not two lines, but four thick volumes, are writ by the hand of St. John, in which not one gleam of superior genius is visible from the first page to the last. But perhaps the most singular feature of this poor performance is its extreme irresolution of purpose. In some passages the author lauds Christianity in terms as glowing as a Clarke or a Baxter could have used in its honour. He says, "No

religion ever yet appeared in the world whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind: if it has had a contrary effect, it has it apparently, not really." — "Christianity is founded on the universal law of nature." — "Christianity, genuine Christianity, is contained in the Gospels — it is the word of God; it requires, therefore, our veneration and a strict conformity to it." Here he only seems about to imply a distinction between the Gospels and the other writings in the New Testament; yet elsewhere he reurges all that deists have ever written against the authenticity of the Gospels as the word of God.

But whatever the sins of Bolingbroke's deistical work, there is no evidence to show that he designed it for publication — much evidence to favour the supposition that he never meant it to be published.

Unfortunately, in his will he bequeathed to David Mallet, the copyright of works, whether published or privately printed, enumerating them by name, and the copy of all his MSS., with the whole of his library.

The deistical essays are not mentioned in the will. It was said by those intimate with Bolingbroke that he had exacted from Mallet a promise that they should not be published. This Mallet denied; but his character for veracity is not unquestionable. Bolingbroke himself, in a letter to Swift, and in allusion to these very essays, or at least to the opinions they embody, not only disclaims the notion of giving them to the public, but expresses himself with the indignation natural to a thoughtful statesman, against the "*esprit fort* — in English, free-thinker" — whom he looks on as "the pest of society, because his endeavours are directed to

loosen its bonds," and declares that he not only disowns, "but detests the character." It is probable enough that, as a politician, Bolingbroke would have shunned to publish the principles at which he had arrived as a metaphysician. And certainly such was the opinion of those who knew his mind the best — his relation Lady Harlington, and his friend Lord Cornbury.

The last wrote feelingly and nobly to Mallet, entreating him to suppress certain criticisms of Church History which had appeared in the Letters on History. Mallet refused, and, bent on making the most money he could by his legacy, not only retained those criticisms, but published the MSS. which fastened on his patron's memory the very character that patron had emphatically declared that he not only disowned, but detested.

Dull as this posthumous book unquestionably was, it did not less shock all sects of Christians because uninviting to all classes of readers. The design of the incendiary was sufficiently evident for odium, though it came out, upon trial, that his match was too damp, and his powder too scanty, to enable him to scorch a beam of the building he had meant to burn down. A name which had just before been assoiled from each old reproach, its claims on admiration denied by none, its titles to respect but feebly criticised by ousted placemen, became branded by an attainder more withering than all which can be framed by the wit of lawyers, and signed by the hand of kings. And, naturally enough, Bolingbroke's bitterest revilers now were those who had been his warmest partisans before. He — the boast and pride of the Tories, their most eloquent chief, their most accomplished author — he to send forth from the tomb, over which they had wreathed their pious

funereal garlands, a traitor's instruction to the common foe for the downfall of that divine Acropolis, which was at once the temple of their worship and the stronghold of their force! Every story of his boyish excesses was revived; every excuse for his political errors was ignored. And if to this day his very genius is questioned, his very style hypercritically carped at, it is not from what he did in his life, but for what — perhaps against his injunctions — an unscrupulous mercenary did on his behalf, when his ears were closed to the voice of man's judgments.

Horace Walpole — who, with his usual levity, calls Bolingbroke's *Metaphysical Divinity* "the best of his writings" — says, "As long as there are parsons, he will be ranked with Tindal and Toland. Nay," adds the slighter infidel, with his cynical sneer — "nay, I don't know whether my father won't become a rubric martyr for having been persecuted by him."

We Christians may, however, afford, nowadays, to Bolingbroke at least, the same indulgence we accord to a less harmless offence in Gibbon. Of Gibbon we have expurgated editions for the perusal of families; we need take little pains to expurgate the editions of Bolingbroke of his posthumous work; we defy it to do the least mischief.

But whatever the sins of the man or the defects of the writer, still, for every student of the age in which he stands forth surrounded by all the Muses, there is a fascinating interest in the name of St. John. And in reading his works, that ineffable charm to which I have before referred as their special characteristic, is in some degree heightened by the spell which the author himself holds over us, as he held, in his own

day, over minds so acute and so various as those of Pope and of Pulteney, of Chesterfield and of Swift.

Still, the chief element of the charm is in the writing itself. Whatever our interest in the character and life of a man, he could not charm us in his writings if his writings themselves had no charm. Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh excite a personal interest, deeper, more unqualified, more enduring, and far more general, than that which we give to Bolingbroke. But their writings, though stamped with an equal genius, have not an equal charm. It is a labour to read through the 'Arcadia,' though it abounds with rare beauties of phrase and fancy; or the 'History of the World,' though it has passages matchless for masculine dignity of style. Once in our lives we may perform such task from a pious sense of the reverence due to England's worthies. Few repeat the dutiful but tedious ceremonial. But no lover of beautiful English can ever be contented to read only once 'The Patriot King,' 'The Letter to Sir William Windham,' 'The Reflexions upon Exile.' Let the volume which contains those writings lie on the table amidst the most popular books of the present day, and it will be chosen for the sake of renewed delight by any true man of letters. Or, should the lad fresh from college take it up for the first time, if there be any promise of author or statesman within him, his eye will soon sparkle and his cheek glow.

Burke formed much of his own style from the study of Bolingbroke. Every reader knows that the 'Vindication of Natural Society' was considered a felicitous imitation of Bolingbroke's manner, and on its first appearance ascribed by many to Bolingbroke him-

self. Indeed, Warburton has said that Burke never wrote so well as when he emulated Bolingbroke; a saying that, somewhat to my surprise, Dugald Stewart approves, so far as it applies to style.*

And in those maturer writings in which Burke attains a height far beyond the reach of his predecessor, there is still the trace of Bolingbroke's early influence. The periods retain certain peculiarities of musical cadence, a certain mannerism in the conduct of argument, that remind us of the model on which the master has improved. Burke has not only far loftier qualities of mind than Bolingbroke — a knowledge of books, though not of men, more accurate, comprehensive, and profound — a reasoning more subtle, an imagination more splendid — but this superiority in gifts and acquirements is accompanied by an equal superiority over Bolingbroke in the very beauties for which Bolingbroke is most remarkable. He excels him in luxury and pomp of language; he excels him in discipline and art of style. The most sovereign genius will be always that, whether in prose or verse, which unites in the highest degree the faculty of reasoning with the faculty of imagination; the most beautiful writing, either in prose or verse, will be that which unites the logical arrangement that satisfies our reason with the splendour of language that delights our imagination. And it appears to me that, in this felicitous union, we have no prose-writer who is the equal of Burke.**

* "If on other occasions he has soared higher than in his 'Vindication of Natural Society,' he has nowhere else (I speak at present merely of the style of his composition) sustained himself so long upon a steady wing."—Dugald Stewart 'On Taste,' Essay III., chap. iv.

** In thus saying, I am by no means insensible to Burke's occasional blemishes; nor do I deny altogether Dugald Stewart's assertion "that the

Burke's command of style is so great, that as by some he was mistaken for Bolingbroke, so by others he has been identified with Junius; though perhaps no style can less resemble another than the loose sweep of Bolingbroke resembles the geometrical precision of Junius. Burke's language is so rich and bold in illustration, in imagery, in variations of rhythmical harmony, that it employs all the resources of poetry, while adhering, with very rare exceptions, to the laws which the ear and the taste assign to the lawful dominion of prose. But his excellence is that of the writer, not of the orator. In reading his speeches, the beauty of their composition will be felt in proportion as we forget that they were composed to be spoken. They are not framed according to the fundamental and necessary principles of effective oratory, but on the rules — which, as I have elsewhere said, are not only differing, but antagonistic — that regulate the method of elaborate essay. The genius of oratory is more irregular and abrupt; it is akin to that of the drama, inasmuch as it does not address men one by one, each in his quiet study, but a miscellaneous audience, which requires to be kept

defect was in his *taste*, which, left to itself, without the guidance of an acknowledged standard of excellence" (Dugald Stewart is referring here to Bolingbroke as that standard), "appears not only to have been warped by some peculiar notions concerning the art of writing, but to have been too wavering and versatile to keep his imagination and his fancy, stimulated as they were by an ostentation of his intellectual riches, and by an ambition of Asiatic ornament, under due control." But there is no writer who has not some faults, and faults of taste are perhaps those the most common to the highest and the lowest order of writers. The taste of Shakespeare and Milton is not always unimpeachable. But it is to the greatest writers that Adam Smith's exclamation applies — "How many great qualities must that writer possess who can thus render his very faults agreeable!" If we desire to find a writer without fault, we must not look for him amongst the greatest writers.

always verging towards that point at which attention relieves its pressure by the vent of involuntary applause. To move numbers simultaneously collected, the passions appealed to must be those which all men have most in common; the arguments addressed to reason must be those which, however new or however embellished, can be as quickly apprehended by men of plain sense as by refining casuists or meditative scholars. Elaborate though Cicero's orations are, they are markedly distinct in style from his philosophical prelections. The essayist quietly affirms a proposition; the orator vehemently asks a question. "You say so and so," observes the essayist about to refute an opponent; "Do you mean to tell us so and so?" demands the impassioned orator. The writer asserts that "the excesses of Catiline became at last insupportable even to the patience of the Senate." "How long will you abuse our patience, Catiline?" exclaims the orator. And an orator who could venture to commence an exordium with a burst so audaciously abrupt, needs no other proof to convince a practised public speaker how absolute must have been his command over his audience. What sympathy in them, and what discipline of voice, manner, countenance in himself, were essential for the successful licence of so fiery a burst into the solemnity of formal impeachment!

Oratory, like the Drama, abhors lengthiness; like the Drama it must keep *doing*. It avoids, as frigid, prolonged metaphysical soliloquy. Beauties themselves, if they delay or distract the effect which should be produced on the audience, become blemishes. Burke, from the very depth of his understanding, demands too great a tension of faculties little exercised by men of the world in general, not to create fatigue in an as-

sembly which men of the world compose. And his ornaments, which do not seem redundant when read, would appear in speech too artificial for that spontaneous utterance which oratory, even when prepared, must condescend to simulate. Again, Burke wants that easy knowledge of everyday life which is more or less essential to a popular public speaker. For each day upon each question there is a something which the party he represents wishes to have said — a something, which it would have been a rashness to say yesterday, will be a platitude said to-morrow — but said to-day, has a pertinent wisdom that may turn the scales of debate. Now, the true orator, however aiming at immortality, must not neglect the moment; for he who speaks what the moment needs, is eloquent without effort. But Burke knew little of what was said at the clubs, and what it was all-important should be said in Parliament at the right time. And what he might know of such popular common-sense matters, and deign to repeat in his own way, he would so transform in the re-creating process of his glowing intellect, that not one man in a hundred would have muttered, "That's *my* thought — how clearly he puts it!"

We see in this the contrast between Burke and Fox. Fox studies far more diligently than is generally supposed — in the quiet of his bedroom, which he does not leave till noon. But he, then, has his levee of gossiping partisans: he hears all that the town says — all that his party thinks it would be useful to say; and the facts or reflections his mind has already stored are at prompt service for the immediate want. Burke comes to join him just in time for the debate, weary, as he himself complains, of the forenoon's mental labour, and

so little in sympathy with the humours and passions of the time and place, that, when he rises to speak, a matter-of-fact partisan plucks him by the coat-tail, with an imploring entreaty to hold his tongue.

That Burke was no popular speaker in Parliament, except upon those rare occasions when all considerations of mere taste give way to the desire to hear what a first-rate intellect has to say upon matters that vitally affect the State, must be ascribed far more to the matter of his speeches than his personal defects as a speaker. It may be very true that he had an untunable voice — a strong brogue — an ungainly gesture; but I think I can cite proof sufficient to show that Burke's *delivery* in spite of its defects, was that of an orator — that is to say, it was a delivery which increased, not diminished, the effect of his matter. Mr. Fox, in the last motion he ever made in the House of Commons, thus, in words which have escaped the notice of those who have discussed the question of Burke's merits as an orator, refers to a speech of Burke's upon the abolition of negro slavery: "It was perhaps the most brilliant and convincing speech ever delivered in this or any other place by a consummate master of eloquence; and of which, I believe, there remains in some publications a report that will convey an inadequate idea of the substance, though it would be impossible to represent the *manner*; — the voice, the gesture, the manner, was not to be described — O, si illum audis, si illum vidis!" *

Now, as many must then have been present, by whom Burke's delivery would have been familiarly

* On the Abolition of the Slave Trade, June 10, 1806. Fox's Speeches, vol. vi. p. 662.

known, it is clear that a man of Fox's sound taste and sense would never have indulged in a compliment, not only to the matter, but still more emphatically to the *manner* of the departed statesman, had it not been recognised as truthful. If the matter had been really marred by the defects of delivery, Fox's cordial praise would have seemed a malignant irony. In fact, the House of Commons is an audience that is very soon reconciled to mere personal defects. It is the triumph of an impassioned and earnest speaker to overcome all hostile impressions on eye and ear which at first interpose between his mind and his audience. Fox's gesticulation was extravagant and graceless; his articulation, in spite of lengthened practice, was so indistinct, that he himself in one of his latest speeches observes, that no reporter could catch his words with sufficient accuracy for faithful report. Yet I doubt not that, though indistinct in the gallery, he contrived to make himself very intelligible to the House. The late Mr. Sheil had almost every defect which tradition ascribes to Burke; an unmistakable brogue — a voice so shrill that its tones were compared to daggers of splintered glass; while in spite of its shrillness, the ear was laboriously strained to distinguish the sense of the sound that shivered as it struck on the tympanum. His action was that which in itself is most distasteful to an audience that abhors the theatrical; it was theatrical, and theatrical to excess. Yet Sheil was surpassed by none of our time in his immediate effect upon the House of Commons. He dazzled and fascinated an attention always eager, sometimes breathless. If his effects were transient — if the *quality* of the effects was not equal to the degree — it was not

because of his voice and gestures. His deficiencies as an orator, whatever they might be, were intellectual; the physical deficiencies he redeemed — they were forgotten while he spoke. But Mr. Sheil's speeches were composed not upon literary but oratorical principles. It was the form in which he cast his thoughts that made him an orator of mark, beyond the standard of his political knowledge and his intellectual capacities — as it was the form in which Burke cast his thoughts that forbade him to gain, save on rare occasions, that sovereign ascendancy over his audience, which, by political knowledge and intellectual capacities, was his unquestionable right. Any young man with the ambition to become a public speaker can test for himself the truth of my remarks. Let him take up one of Pitt's or Fox's speeches on the French Revolution. They are very badly reported, but enough of the original remains to show the mode in which those masters of the art of oratory conducted the argument they severally advanced. Let him declaim aloud, to any circle of listeners, some of the more animated passages in those mutilated harangues; and if he can declaim tolerably well, he will perceive at once that he is speaking as parliamentary orators speak — that the effects require no histrionic skill of delivery; they are palpable — popular; the sense is easily uttered and quickly understood, and will even at this day excite a certain sensation in listeners, because it embodies elementary differences of opinion, and places those differences in the light and the warmth of the broadest day. Let him then try to speak aloud one of those grand essays which are called Burke's Speeches, and he will soon find the difficulty of suiting phraseology so uncollo-

quial, and reasoning so refined, to the tone and gesture of a practical debater. They would require a delivery as skilful as that which the more metaphysically thoughtful, or the more abstractedly poetic passages of Shakespeare require in an actor — in order to conciliate the imagination to an involuntary jar upon the reverence with which, in reflective stillness, we have been accustomed to ponder over oracles so subtle, conveyed from penetralia so remote. It is the same with many famous works in didactic or moralising poetry, which a person of ordinary refinement will peruse, when alone, with pleasure, but which become wearisome when read aloud; whereas other works akin to the drama, and therefore to oratory, may please and impress more when spoken than they do when perused in the closet. The 'Death of Marmion,' or 'Lord Ullin's Daughter,' almost requires to be recited in order to be fully appreciated. But who would wish to hear *recited* the 'Excursion,' or the 'Essay on Man'?

It is more than doubtful whether Burke himself ever spoke his speeches as they are now printed. They were carefully revised for publication, and revised in order to be perfect literary compositions — filed from the roughness, and elaborated from the haste, of oral utterance; and, therefore, it is as literary compositions that they seem to me to deserve our reverential praise and requite our impassioned study — models, as nobly instructive to the young writer, as they would be fatally injurious to the young orator.

To close these remarks, it is according to the nature of the author's work that we should more or less give the preference to richness of language, or to concinnity of style.

In writings that treat of the ordinary business of life, or seek to explain rather than suggest, symbolise, or depict, some selected truth, we naturally prefer a style compact and lucid, dispensing with a pomp of words which would be an ostentation impertinent to the simplicity of the occasion. On the other hand, in those classes of composition which are more or less generic to poetry, inasmuch as they are chiefly addressed to the imagination, and through the imagination wind their way to the reason, a style of architectural structure, with all its proportions measured by an inch scale, would be destructive to the effects which the writer desires to produce. To enlist the imagination on your side, you must leave it free to imagine for itself.

When we want practically to build a dwelling-house, let the builder show us his plan in plain geometrical outlines. We suspect that there is something wrong in his construction, that there is some defect which he desires to conceal, when he adds to his drawing the hues of a sunset, or dips the unsightly office-wing into the pleasant gloom of an imaginary grove. But when we wish rather to see on the canvas some ancient legendary castle, some illustration of scenes which heroes have trodden or poets have sung, then we willingly lend ourselves to the beautifying art by which the painter harmonises reality to our own idealising preconceptions; then the thunder-cloud may rest upon the ruined battlements, then the moonlight may stream through the gaping fissures, or, then, the landscapes of Spenser's Fairyland may take a Nature of their own, never seen on earth, yet faithful to our dreams, as they rise from the pallet of Turner in the glory of golden haze.

Thus, in the literature of romance, we must admit to creative prose a licence analogous to that which we accord to creative verse. For Romance, though its form be in prose, does in substance belong to poetry, obey the same conditions, and necessitate the same indulgence.

Nor is it in fiction alone (wherein audacity in the resources of poetic diction is obviously proportioned to the degree in which that fiction approaches, or recedes from, the poetic aspects of life) that we are compelled to relax severe canons as to the mechanism of style, if we would leave free play to the higher delight derivable from luxury and glow of language. There are subjects which can only be rescued from triteness, by showing those more latent phases of the Material that rest half-hid amid types and parables of the Spiritual. When Jeremy Taylor discourses on Marriage, what new and endearing light the preacher throws upon the sacred mystery of the indissoluble bond, by words and images that exact from our taste the licence it accords to the poet! And there is many a truth — whether found hourly by the side of crowded thoroughfares, or in shadowy dingles and forest-deeps, unpenetrated by the star — which we may enable science to classify more accurately, and the common reader to comprehend more plainly, if, instead of dry speculation on its botanical attributes, we place in our page the form and the colours of the flower.

Nor, where the imagination of the author has wealth sufficient to render display an appropriate evidence of riches, and not the artifice of the impostor seeking to disguise his poverty, need we fear that the substance of good sense will be slighter for the delicate arabesques,

which may give to a thing of use the additional value of a work of art. On the contrary, the elegance of the ornament not unfrequently attests the stoutness of the fabric. Only into their most durable tissues did the Genoese embroiderers weave their delicate threads of gold; only on their hardest steel did the smiths of Milan damaskeen the gracious phantasies which still keep their armour among the heirlooms of royal halls, and guide the eye of the craftsman to numberless fresh applications of former art, though the armour itself be worn no more. The Useful passes away with each generation into new uses. The Beautiful remains a fixed unalterable standard of value, by which the Useful itself is compelled to calculate the worth of its daily labours.

ESSAY X.

HINTS ON MENTAL CULTURE.

HINTS ON MENTAL CULTURE.

IN the high-wrought state of civilisation at which we are arrived, few complaints are more common than that of a brain overworked. This complaint is not confined to authors and students; it extends to all who strive for name or fortune against eager and numerous competitors. The politician, the professional man, the merchant, the speculator — all must experience that strain of special faculties in the direction towards special objects, out of which comes nervous exhaustion, with the maladies consequent on over-stimulus and prolonged fatigue. Horace is a sound pathologist, when he tells us that, after Prometheus had stolen fire from heaven, a cohort of fevers, unknown before, encamped themselves on earth. In our audacious age we are always stealing new fire, and swelling the cohort of fevers with new recruits. The weary descendant of Iapetus droops at last — the stolen fire begins to burn low — the watchful cohort pounces on its prey. The doctor is summoned, hears the case, notes the symptoms, and prescribes — repose.

But repose is not always possible. The patient cannot stop in the midst of his career — in the thick of his schemes. Or, supposing that he rush off to snatch a nominal holiday from toil, he cannot leave Thought

behind him. Thought, like Care, mounts the steed and climbs the bark.

A brain habitually active will not be ordered to rest. It is not like the inanimate glebe of a farm, which, when exhausted, you restore by the simple precept, "Let it lie fallow." A mind once cultivated will not lie fallow for half an hour. If a patient, habituated to reflection, has nothing else to meditate, his intellect and fancy will muse exclusively over his own ailments; — Muse over a finger-ache, and engender a gangrene. What, then, should be done? Change the occupation, vary the culture, call new organs into play; restore the equilibrium deranged in overweighting one scale by weights thrown into another.

In therapeutic gymnastics, we strengthen one set of muscles hitherto little called into play, in order to correct the tendencies to a malady which the fatigue of another set of muscles has induced. What is thus good for the bodily health, I hold to be yet more good for the whole mental development of man. Mrs. Somerville has written a charming and popular book on 'The Connection of the Sciences;' but it is not only the sciences which have a family kinship; all the faculties and all the acquisitions of the human intellect are relations to each other: — The true chief of a clan never disowns remote affinities; the wider his clanship the greater his power: so it is with a true genius; the more numerous its clansmen, the higher its dignity of chief. If there be some one specialty in art, literature, science, active life, in which we can best succeed, that specialty is improved and enriched by all the contributions obtainable from other departments of study. Read the treatises on Oratory, and you stand aghast

at the wondrous amount of information which the critical authorities assure you is necessary for the accomplishment of a perfect orator. But you may say that, according to the proverb, the orator is made; the poet is born. Read, then, the works of any really first-rate poet, and you will acknowledge that there was never a more delusive lie than that which the proverb instils into the credulous ears of poetasters. It is the astonishing accumulation of ideas, certainly not inborn, but acquired alone through experience and study, which makes the most prominent characteristic of a first-rate poet. His knowledge of things, apart from the mere form of poetry, strikes you more than his melodies as a poet. Surely it is so with Homer, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Scott. Certainly it need not always with the poet be knowledge of books, but it is knowledge of man or of nature, only to be obtained by exerting organs of mind wholly distinct from those which are required to fabricate a rhythm and invent an expression. Whatever our intellectual calling, no kind of knowledge is antagonistic to it. All varieties of knowledge blend with, harmonise, enrich the one kind of knowledge to which we attach our reputation.

Frequently we meet with a writer who achieves one remarkable book, and whatever other books he writes are comparative failures — echoes of the same thought, repetitions of the same creations. The reason of that stint of invention is obvious; the author has embodied certain ideas long meditated; and if his book be really great, all the best of those ideas are poured into it. In the interval between that book and the next, he has not paused to ponder new studies and

gather from them new ideas, and the succeeding books comprise but the leavings of the old ideas.

A man of genius is inexhaustible only in proportion as he is always renourishing his genius. Both in mind and body, where nourishment ceases vitality fails.

To sail round the world, you must put in at many harbours, if not for rest, at least for supplies.

To any young author of promise, in the commencement of his career, my advice is this, Till you have succeeded in working out your conception, persevere in that one conception; work it out. When you have succeeded — exhausting the best ideas that went to its completion — take care not to repeat the same experiment. Adventure some experiment wholly new; but before you so adventure, be sure that you have taken in wholly new ideas.

The wider your range of thought, the greater your chance and choice of original combinations.

The writer who adopts this counsel is vulgarly called "versatile." That is a misnomer. It is not that Genius is versatile because the objects within its scope are various. If you have twenty thousand a-year instead of one thousand, you are not versatile because you do a great many things which a man of a thousand a-year cannot do.

According to the axioms in optics, "we see everything by means of the rays of light which proceed from it." The eye is not versatile because it is sensible to the rays of light from more things than one.

Again, in optics, "we see everything in the direction of that line in which the rays approach the eye last." Genius is not versatile because in the sweep of

its swift survey it sees each thing in the direction of the line in which the rays approach last to its view.

He who is always observant will be always various.

But in my recommendation to seek less in repose of thought (which is scarcely possible to the thoughtful) than in change of the objects of thought (which to all thinkers is possible), the safety from over-fatigue and exhaustion, mental and bodily, I do not address only the children of Genius, who will take their own way, with small heed of what critics may say to them — I appeal to all sober mortals who, whatever their career or their calling, wish to make the most of themselves in this multiiform trial of life.

We are not sent here to do merely some one thing, which we can scarcely suppose that we shall be required to do again, when, crossing the Styx, we find ourselves in eternity. Whether I am a painter, a sculptor, a poet, a romance-writer, an essayist, a politician, a lawyer, a merchant, a hatter, a tailor, a mechanic at factory or loom, — it is certainly much for me in this life to do the one thing I profess to do as well as I can. But when I have done that, and that thing alone, nothing more, where is my profit in the life to come? I do not believe that I shall be asked to paint pictures, carve statues, write odes, trade at Exchange, make hats or coats, or manufacture pins and cotton prints, when I am in the Emyrean. Whether I be the grandest genius on earth in a single thing, and that single thing earthy — or the poor peasant who, behind his plough, whistles for want of thought, — I strongly suspect it will be all one when I pass to the Competitive Examination — yonder! On the other side of the grave a Raffaele's occupation may

be gone as well as a ploughman's. This world is a school for the education not of a faculty, but of a man. Just as in the body, if I resolve to be a rower, and only a rower, the chances are that I shall have, indeed, strong arms, but weak legs, and be stricken with blindness from the glare of the water; so in the mind, if I care but for one exercise, and do not consult the health of the mind altogether, I may, like George Morland, be a wonderful painter of pigs and pig-sties, but in all else, as a human being, be below contempt — an ignoramus and a drunkard!

We men are not fragments — we are wholes; we are not types of single qualities — we are realities of mixed, various, countless combinations.

Therefore I say to each man, "As far as you can — partly for excellence in your special mental calling, principally for completion of your end in existence — strive, while improving your one talent, to enrich your whole capital as Man. It is in this way that you escape from that wretched narrow-mindedness which is the characteristic of every one who cultivates his specialty alone: Take any specialty; dine with a distinguished member of Parliament — the other guests all members of Parliament except yourself — you go away shrugging your shoulders. All the talk has been that of men who seem to think that there is nothing in life worth talking about but the party squabbles and jealousies of the House of Commons. Go and dine next day with an eminent author — all the guests authors except yourself. As the wine circulates, the talk narrows to the last publications, with, now and then, on the part of the least successful author present, a refining eulogium on some dead writer, in implied dis-

paragement of some living rival. He wants to depreciate Dickens, and therefore he extols Fielding. If Fielding were alive and Dickens were dead, how he would extol Dickens! Go, the third day; dine with a trader — all the other guests being gentlemen on the Stock Exchange. A new specialty is before you; all the world seems circumscribed to scrip and the budget. In fine, whatever the calling, let men only cultivate that calling, and they are as narrow-minded as the Chinese when they place on the map of the world the Celestial Empire, with all its Tartaric villages in full detail, and out of that limit make dots and lines, with the superscription, "Deserts unknown, inhabited by barbarians!"

Nevertheless, you are not wise, if, dining with any such hosts, you do not carry away from the talk you have heard something of value that you could not otherwise have gained. The circle of life is cut up into segments. All lines are equal if they are drawn from the centre and touch the circumference.

Every man of sound brain whom you meet, knows something worth knowing better than yourself. A man, on the whole, is a better preceptor than a book. But what scholar does not allow that the dullest book can suggest to him a new and a sound idea? Take a dull man and a dull book; if you have any brains of your own, the dull man is more instructive than the dull book. Take a great book, and its great author; how immeasurably above his book is the author, if you can coax him to confide his mind to you, and let himself out!

What would you not give to have an hour's frank talk with Shakespeare — if Shakespeare were now liv-

ing? You cannot think of yourself so poorly as not to feel sure that, at the end of the hour, you would have got something out of him which fifty years' study would not suffice to let you get out of his plays. Goldsmith was said by Garrick to "write like an angel and talk like poor Poll." But what does that prove?—nothing more than this, that the player could not fathom the poet. A man who writes like an angel cannot always talk like poor Poll. That Goldsmith, in his peach-coloured coat, awed by a Johnson, bullied by a Boswell, talked very foolishly, I can well understand; but let any gentle reader of human brains and human hearts have got Goldsmith all to himself over a bottle of madeira, in Goldsmith's own lodging — talked to Goldsmith lovingly and reverentially about "The Traveller" and "The Vicar of Wakefield," and sure I am that he would have gone away with the conviction that there was something in the wellspring of so much genius more marvellous than its diamond-like spray — something in poor Oliver Goldsmith immeasurably greater than those faint and fragmentary expressions of the man which yet survive in the exquisite poem, in the incomparable novel.

I remember being told by a personage who was both a very popular writer and a very brilliant converser, that the poet Campbell reminded him of Goldsmith — his conversation was so inferior to his fame. I could not deny it; for I had often met Campbell in general society, and his talk had disappointed me. Three days afterwards, Campbell asked me to come and sup with him *tête-à-tête*. I did so. I went at ten o'clock. I stayed till dawn; and all my recollections of the most sparkling talk I have ever heard in drawing-rooms,

afford nothing to equal the riotous affluence of wit, of humour, of fancy, of genius, that the great lyrist poured forth in his wondrous monologue. Monologue it was; he had it all to himself.

If the whole be greater than a part, a whole man must be greater than that part of him which is found in a book.

As we vary our study in books, so we should vary our study in men. Among our friends and associates we should have some whose pursuits differ from our own. Nothing more conduces to liberality of judgment than facile intercourse with various minds. The commerce of intellect loves distant shores. The small retail dealer trades only with his neighbour; when the great merchant trades, he links the four quarters of the globe. Above all, maintain acquaintanceship with those who represent the common sense of the time in which you live. "It is a great thing," said Goethe, "to have something in common with the commonalty of men." We should know little of our age if we lived only with sages. On the other hand, we should never be above our age if we did not now and then listen to sages.

This is a busy world; never deem yourself superior to what Bacon calls "the wisdom of business." If your pursuits take you somewhat aside from the practical affairs of life — if you are a poet, a scholar, an artist — it is the more necessary that you should keep yourself wide awake when you deal with a tradesman or look into your accounts; for it is a popular notion that poets, scholars, and artists can be very easily cheated; and therefore more people try to cheat them than they do ordinary mortals. Even among the

inferior races, the more a creature is likely to be preyed upon, the more wary and vigilant Nature designs it to be. Poet, before you sit down to surpass "Paradise Lost," be sure that you know the market price of mutton; you may not surpass "Paradise Lost," but you will certainly have to pay for your mutton! Politician, before you devote yourself to your country with the ambition to excel Mr. Pitt, see that your servants don't cheat you; they cheated Mr. Pitt, and, in cheating him, made one of those few dread humiliations of his august life which brought tears to his proud eyes, but no amendment in his weekly bills. Perhaps the only thing in which, O politician! you may resemble Mr. Pitt, is, that your servants may cheat you; and if you are not Mr. Pitt, no friends will come forward to humble you by paying your debts. Poet or politician, the more you labour for immortality, be the more on your guard that your mortal career do not close in the Queen's Bench! but especially if you be a professional man of letters, living on the profits of your pen, let your publisher know that you are as punctual and scrupulous in the fulfilment of engagements as if he were dealing with a formal clerk in the City. No genius can afford to dispense with loyalty and honour. Loyalty and honour necessitate the attention to business. Every man to whom you make a promise that you will do such and such work in a certain time, should rest assured that your word is as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar. Confidence is the first principle of all business.

It is a wondrous advantage to a man, in every pursuit or avocation, to secure an adviser in a sensible woman. In woman there is at once a subtle delicacy

of tact, and a plain soundness of judgment, which are rarely combined to an equal degree in man. A woman, if she be really your friend, will have a sensitive regard for your character, honour, repute. She will seldom counsel you to do a shabby thing, for a woman-friend always desires to be proud of you. At the same time, her constitutional timidity makes her more cautious than your male friend. She, therefore, seldom counsels you to do an imprudent thing. By female friendships I mean pure friendships — those in which there is no admixture of the passion of love, except in the married state. A man's best female friend is a wife of good sense and good heart, whom he loves, and who loves him. If he have that, he need not seek elsewhere. But supposing the man to be without such helpmate, female friendships he must still have, or his intellect will be without a garden, and there will be many an unheeded gap even in its strongest fence. Better and safer, of course, such friendships where disparities of years or circumstances put the idea of love out of the question. Middle life has rarely this advantage; youth and old age have. We may have female friendships with those much older, and those much younger, than ourselves. Molière's old housekeeper was a great help to his genius; and Montaigne's philosophy takes both a gentler and a loftier character of wisdom from the date in which he finds, in Marie de Gournay, an adopted daughter, "certainly beloved by me," says the Horace of essayists, "with more than paternal love, and involved in my solitude and retirement, as one of the best parts of my being." Female friendship, indeed, is to man "*præsidium et dulce decus*" — the bulwark and sweet ornament of his existence. To his mental

culture it is invaluable; without it all his knowledge of books will never give him knowledge of the world.

In science, read, by preference, the newest works; in literature, the oldest. The classic literature is always modern. New books revive and re-decorate old ideas; old books suggest and invigorate new ideas.

It is a great preservative to a high standard in taste and achievement, to take every year some one great book as an especial study, not only to be read, but to be conned, studied, brooded over; to go into the country with it, travel with it, be devotedly faithful to it, be without any other book for the time; compel yourself thus to read it again and again. Who can be dull enough to pass long days in the intimate, close, familiar intercourse with some transcendent mind, and not feel the benefit of it when he returns to the common world?

But whatever standard of mental excellence you thus form in your study of the Excellent, never, if you wish to be wise, let your standard make you intolerant to any other defects but your own. The surest sign of wisdom is charity; and the best charity is that which never ostentatiously parades itself as charity. For your idea of man as he ought to be, always look upward; but to judge aright man as he is, never affect to stoop. Look your fellow-man straight in the face. Learn all you possibly can; and when you have learned that all, I repeat it, you will never converse with any man of sound brain who does not know something worth knowing better than yourself.

Sir Walter Scott, in a letter to Joanna Baillie, says: "I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled

all efforts to engage him in conversation except one, whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage-coach. My friend,* who piqued himself on his talents for conversation, assailed this tortoise on all hands, but in vain; and at length descended to expostulation.

“I have talked to you, my friend, on all the ruling subjects, — literature, farming, merchandise, gaming, game-laws, horse-races, suits at law, politics, and swindling, and blasphemy, and philosophy — is there any one subject that you will favour me by opening upon?’ The wight writhed his countenance into a grin. ‘Sir,’ said he, ‘can you say anything clever about bend-leather?’

“There,” says Sir Walter, “I own I should have been as much nonplussed as my acquaintance.”

I venture to doubt that modest assertion. Sir Walter would have perceived that he had not there to teach, but to learn; and I am quite certain that before the end of the journey, he would have extracted from the traveller all that the traveller could have told him about bend-leather. And if Sir Walter had learned all about bend-leather — what then? What then? It would have been sure to have come out in one of his books, suggested some felicity in humour, or sported into some playful novelty in character, which would have made the whole reading world merrier and wiser.

It is not knowledge that constitutes the difference between the man who adds to the uses and embellishments of life, and the man who leaves the world just as he found it. The difference between the two consists in the reproduction of knowledge — in the degree

* This friend was Mr. William Clerk.

to which the mind appropriates, tests, experimentalises on, all the waifs of idea which are borne to it from the minds of others.

A certain nobleman, very proud of the extent and beauty of his pleasure-grounds, chancing one day to call on a small squire, whose garden might cover about half an acre, was greatly struck with the brilliant colours of his neighbour's flowers. "Ay, my Lord, the flowers are well enough," said the squire, "but permit me to show you my grapes." Conducted into an old-fashioned little greenhouse, which served as a vinery, my Lord gazed, with mortification and envy, on grapes twice as fine as his own. "My dear friend," said my Lord, "you have a jewel of a gardener; let me see him!" The gardener was called — the single gardener — a simple-looking young man under thirty. "Accept my compliments on your flower-beds and your grapes," said my Lord, "and tell me, if you can, why your flowers are so much brighter than mine, and your grapes so much finer. You must have studied horticulture profoundly." "Please your Lordship," said the man, "I have not had the advantage of much education; I ben't no scholar; but as to the flowers and the vines, the secret as to treating them just came to me, you see, by chance."

"By chance? explain."

"Well, my Lord, three years ago, master sent me to Lunnion on business of his'n; and it came on to rain, and I took shelter in a mews, you see."

"Yes; you took shelter in a mews; — what then?"

"And there were two gentlemen taking shelter too; and they were talking to each other about charcoal."

"About charcoal? — go on."

"And one said that it had done a deal o' good in many cases of sickness, and specially in the first stage of the cholera, and I took a note on my mind of that, because we'd had the cholera in our village the year afore. And I guessed the two gentlemen were doctors, and knew what they were talking about."

"I daresay they did; but flowers and vines don't have the cholera, do they?"

"No, my Lord; but they have complaints of their own; and one of the gentlemen went on to say that charcoal had a special good effect upon all vegetable life, and told a story of a vinedresser, in Germany, I think, who had made a very sickly poor vineyard one of the best in all those parts, simply by charcoal-dressings. So I naturally pricked up my ears at that, for our vines were in so bad a way that master thought of doing away with them altogether. 'Ay,' said the other gentleman, 'and see how a little sprinkling of charcoal will brighten up a flower-bed.'"

"The rain was now over, and the gentlemen left the mews; and I thought, 'Well, but before I try the charcoal upon my plants, I'd best make some inquiry of them as aren't doctors, but gardeners;' so I went to our nurseryman, who has a deal of book-learning, and I asked him if he'd ever heard of charcoal-dressing being good for vines, and he said he had read in a book that it was so, but had never tried it. He kindly lent me the book, which was translated from some forren one. And, after I had picked out of it all I could, I tried the charcoal in the way the book told me to try it; and that's how the grapes and the flower-beds came to please you, my Lord. It was a

lucky chance that ever I heard those gentlemen talking in the mews, please your Lordship."

"Chance happens to all," answered the peer, sententially; "but to turn chance to account is the gift of few."

His Lordship, returning home, gazed gloomily on the hues of his vast parterres; he visited his vineries, and scowled at the clusters; he summoned his head gardener — a gentleman of the highest repute for science, and who never spoke of a cowslip except by its name in Latin. To this learned personage my Lord communicated what he had heard and seen of the benignant effects of charcoal, and produced in proof a magnificent bunch of grapes, which he had brought from the squire's.

"My Lord," said the gardener, scarcely glancing at the grapes, "Squire ——'s gardener must be a poor ignorant creature to fancy he had discovered a secret in what is so very well known to every professed horticulturist. Professor Liebig, my Lord, has treated of the good effect of charcoal-dressing to vines especially; and it is to be explained on these chemical principles" — therewith the wise man entered into a profound dissertation, of which his Lordship did not understand a word.

"Well, then," said the peer, cutting short the harangue, "since you know so well that charcoal-dressing is good for vines and flowers, have you ever tried it on mine?"

"I can't say I have, my Lord; it did not chance to come into my head."

"Nay," replied the peer, "chance put it into your head, but thought never took it out of your head."

My Lord, who, if he did not know much about horticulture, was a good judge of mankind, dismissed the man of learning; and, with many apologies for seeking to rob his neighbour of such a treasure, asked the squire to transfer to his service the man of genius. The squire, who thought that now the charcoal had been once discovered, any new gardener could apply it as well as the old one, was too happy to oblige my Lord, and advance the fortunes of an honest fellow born in his village. His Lordship knew very well that a man who makes good use of the ideas received through chance, will make a still better use of ideas received through study. He took some kind, but not altogether unselfish, pains with the training and education of the man of genius whom he had gained to his service. The man is now my Lord's head forester and bailiff. The woods thrive under him, the farm pays largely. He and my Lord are both the richer for the connection between them. He is not the less practically painstaking, though he no longer says "ben't" and "his'n;" nor the less felicitously theoretical, though he no longer ascribes a successful experiment to chance.

ESSAY XI.

ON THE MORAL EFFECT OF WRITERS.

ON THE MORAL EFFECT OF WRITERS.

GODWIN has somewhere remarked on the essential distinction between the moral object and the moral tendency of a work. A writer may present to you, at the end of his book, some unexceptionable dogma which parents would cordially admit into the copy-book ethics of their children, yet, in the process of arriving at his harmless aphorism, he may have led the mind as much astray into mischief as it is in his power to do. On the other hand, a writer may seek to work out a proposition, from the moral truth of which there would be a very general dissent, and yet be either harmless, or often instructive and elevating, from the reasonings which he employs, or even from the mere art which embellishes his composition, and supersedes, in the mind of the reader, the purpose to which the art was applied. For Art itself is essentially ethical; because every true work of Art must have a beauty or grandeur of some kind, and beauty and grandeur cannot be comprehended by the beholder except through the moral sentiment. The eye is only a witness; it is not a judge. The mind judges what the eye reports to it; therefore, whatever elevates the moral sentiment to the contemplation of beauty and grandeur is in itself ethical. Though no Christian can approve the

idolatrous worship to which the Parthenon was devoted, or which the Apollo Belvidere represented, few Christians nowadays would deny that the human intellect has been refined and exalted by the study of those masterpieces of Art. The object for which they were created by their artists is annulled, but their effect is existent and imperishable. It may indeed be said that the refinement or even the elevation of the intellect is not necessarily an improvement to the moral being; and unquestionably it must be owned that an individual, nay sometimes a generation, may combine exquisite refinement of taste with profound corruption of manners — just as it is possible that an individual or a generation may unite a sincere devotion to the mild Christian faith with the savage fanaticism of a follower of Omar; but the salutary effect of Art, as that of Christianity, must be sought not in an individual nor in a generation, but in the concrete masses of society, and in the progressive history of the human race. In Art the salutary effect may not be directly and immediately derived from the original standards, models, and types of Beauty; more often it is to be indirectly and remotely traced, in countless succession, through an intricate variety of minds, to which the originals have suggested new forms of Art, new presentations of Beauty. In the heathen temples of the East originated the outlines of the Gothic architecture now so essentially Christian.

Art, in fact, is the effort of man to express the ideas which Nature suggests to him of a power above Nature, whether that power be within the recesses of his own being, or in the Great First Cause of which Nature, like himself, is but the effect.

Art employs itself in the study of Nature, for the purpose of implying, though but by a hint or a symbol, the supernatural. By the word supernatural I mean, not that which is against Nature, but that which is above Nature. Man himself, in this sense of the word (the only sense in which Philosophy can employ it), is supernatural. And hence Jacobi, justly termed by Sir William Hamilton "the pious and profound," says with felicitous boldness, "that it is the supernatural in man which reveals to him the God whom Nature conceals." Mere Nature does not reveal a Deity to such of her children as cannot conceive the supernatural. She does not reveal Him to the cedar and the rose, to the elephant and the moth. Man alone, from his own supernatural — that is, his own spiritual — attribute, conceives at once, even in his most savage state, even in his earliest infancy, the idea of the Supernatural which Nature, without such attribute in man himself, could not reveal to him; and out of that conception is born Art, which we not only degrade, but altogether mistake and falsify, if we call it the imitation of Nature.

The acanthus leaf may suggest the form of a capital to a column; a vista through the forest stems may suggest a peristyle or an aisle. But a temple, whether in Assyria, in Greece, in China, in England, is no imitation of Nature — it is a selection from Nature of certain details arranged into a whole, to which no whole in Nature has resemblance, and intended to convey ideas of a something which man conjectures or divines to be supernatural by reason of the supernatural within himself.

It is thus with art in sculpture, in masonry, in

colour; it is so with the nobler art which finds sculpture, masonry, and colour in man's most primitive expression of thought — Language.

There is no work of true Art in language existent, nor can there ever be one, in which there is not expressed the idea of a power beyond external Nature; in which there is not some creation which external Nature never produced; in which there are not appeals to sympathies, affections, aspirations — which would be the same in the innermost shrine of man's being, if external Nature were annihilated, and man left a spirit in a world of spirit.

As, in the art of masonry, sculpture, or colour, the effect of true art is ethical, whatever the original intention or object of the artist — so it is in the art of language. All Genius comprehends Art as its necessity: where there is no art, there can be no genius in a book, any more than without art there can be genius in a picture or a statue. Every book of first rate genius is and must be a work of first-rate art; though it may be a kind of art so opposed to the fashion of the day that the common criticism of the day, nay even the finest taste of the day, may not detect and appreciate it. Neither Ben Jonson nor even Milton comprehended the sovereign Mastership of Art in Shakespeare. But Shakespeare himself could not have been conscious of his own art. And no writer, whatever his moral object, can foresee what in the course of ages may be the moral effect of his performance.

The satirical design in 'Gulliver's Travels' is certainly not that which philanthropists would commend to the approval of youth. It seeks to mock away all

by which man's original nature is refined, softened, exalted, and adorned; it directs the edge of its ridicule at the very roots of those interests and motives by which society has called cities from the quarry, and gardens from the wild; and closes all its assaults upon the framework of civilised communities with the most ruthless libel upon man himself that ever gave the venom of Hate to the stings of wit. Yet the book itself, in spite of its design, has no immoral, no misanthropical influence: we place it without scruple in the hands of our children: the lampoon upon humanity is the favourite fairy tale of the nursery. And I doubt if any man can say that he was ever the worse for all that was meant to make him scorn and detest his species in *The Voyage to Laputa* or the description of the Yahoos; while the art of the book is so wonderful in rendering lifelike the creations of a fancy only second to Shakespeare's in its power of "imagining new worlds," that, age after age, it will contribute to the adornment and improvement of the human race, by perpetual suggestions to the inventive genius by which, from age to age, the human race is adorned or improved. None of us can foresee what great discoveries, even in practical science, may have their first germ in the stimulus given to a child's imaginative ideas by the perusal of a work in which genius has made fiction truthlike, and the marvellous natural. "Wonder," says Aristotle, "is the first cause of philosophy." This is quite as true in the progress of the individual as in that of the concrete mind; and the constant aim of philosophy is to destroy its parent. In vain. Where wonder is ejected from one form it reappears in another — transmutable always — destructible never.

But, to return to the distinction between the object and the tendency of an author's work. No one would think it necessary to vindicate the morality of Johnson's 'Rasselas,' few would extol the morality in Voltaire's 'Candide,' yet there is so much similarity in the moral object of the two stories, that Voltaire congratulated himself on having published 'Candide' before 'Rasselas' appeared. "Otherwise," he said, "I should have been accused of plagiarising the philosophical conception of the distinguished Englishman."

In fact, as two travellers may arrive at the same inn by different roads and in different company, so two writers can arrive at the same moral conclusion through very different paths; and the impression of the journey left on the mind depends on the features of the country traversed, and the companions one has had by the way. It is not rendered alike in both the travellers because they meet at last under the same sign, and conclude their adventures with a chop off the same mutton.

It is the property of true genius, in proportion as time acts upon its works, to lose its deleterious particles, and retain only those which are innocuous or salutary. The interests of mankind never concede lasting popularity to works that would seriously injure them. Some works, it is true, of an order inferior to that which is assigned to the masterpieces of genius, may be decidedly wicked in their effect if indiscriminately read; but look for them a few generations after their first appearance, and you will never find them among the current literature of a people — they will have shrunk out of sight in the obscure corners of learned libraries, referred to only by scholars or his-

torians as illustrations of manners in a bygone age, and read by them with the same cold scientific eye that a physician casts upon specimens of morbid anatomy. The works that remain incorporated in the world's literature all serve to contribute to the world's improvement. Passages, indeed, here and there, as in the classic poets, are extremely censurable; but they sink into insignificance compared with the general excellence of the pervading wholes — as, in mortal life, human imperfections and blemishes little affect the good derivable from the large example of a saint's or a hero's character. From Nature herself we may select partial evil. If we choose, out of all her products, to take the nightshade for our nutriment, though, beside the hedge in which it lurks, the prodigal corn glitters ripe in the sun, we may certainly harm ourselves, and lay the fault upon Nature; but Nature is not to blame if we devour the nightshade and eschew the corn.

The great poem of Lucretius expounds the creed of an atheist; no modern collegian was ever made an atheist by reading the poem of Lucretius. Has any modern collegian been made the better, the wiser, the nobler, by reading it? In all probability, yes! Because the poem abounds with ideas that enrich his intellect and exalt his thoughts. Its sublimity, as Dugald Stewart justly observes, "will be found to depend chiefly, even in those passages where he (Lucretius) denies the interference of the gods in the government of the world, in the lively images which he indirectly presents to his readers of the attributes against which he reasons. . . . The sublimest descriptions of Almighty Power sometimes forming a part of

his argument against the Divine Omnipotence."* In fact, the poem, to a very ordinary reason, is in itself a refutation of its philosophical purpose. It would resolve the artistic design of creation to a fortuitous concurrence of atoms. But could any one, reading the poem, conceive that those harmonious lines could be strung together by fortuitous concurrence? And follows it not, as a corollary of common sense, that, if a poem cannot be written without a poet, the universe cannot be created without a Creator?

Hence, I think, it will be found that the best and subtlest effects of writers are those of which they were themselves unconscious while writing. Critics, in later times, gain repute by discovering what the author did not mean. I have said that Shakespeare could not be conscious of his own art. How many recondite designs are imputed to him, of which he was wholly unaware? I have read an elaborate argument to prove that the character of Shylock was conceived as a plea in favour of religious toleration. But it is clearly the man to whom the idea of religious toleration is familiar, in a subsequent age, who discovers that Shylock may be applied as an illustration of an argument in favour of the emancipation of the Jews. Goethe, in examining the depths of meaning in 'Hamlet,' introduces the line, "He's fat and scant of breath," in order to give a physical clue to the intricate moral character of the Danish prince.** "The fencing tires him," says Wilhelm Meister; "and the Queen remarks, 'He's fat and scant of breath.' Can you conceive him to be other-

* Dugald Stewart 'On the Sublime,' Essay II., chap. II.

** 'Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,' Carlyle's Translation. Book v. c. 6.

wise than plump and fair-haired? Brown-complexioned people, in their youth, are seldom plump; and does not his wavering melancholy, his soft lamenting, his irresolute activity, accord with such a figure? From a dark-haired young man you would look for more decision and impetuosity."

The dogmas conveyed in this criticism are neither historically nor physiologically correct. If, as Wilhelm Meister had just before asserted, "Hamlet must be fair-haired and blue-eyed — as a Dane, as a Northman," — certainly, of all the populations on the earth, the Dane, the Northman, has ever been the least characterised by "wavering melancholy" or "soft lamenting." The old Scandinavian Vikings did not yield to any dark-haired warriors "in decision and impetuosity." To this day, those districts in England wherein the old Danish race left their descendants — where the blue eye and light sandy hair are most frequently seen — as in the Scottish Lowlands, the Northern Border counties, in Lincolnshire, or in Norfolk (those provinces in which Palgrave proves the wholesale settlement of the Danes), the superior activity, the practical long-headedness, the ready adaptation of shrewd wit to immediate circumstance — in short, all the attributes most opposed to the character of Hamlet, are proverbially evidenced. Nor is it true that the fair-haired children of the North are more inclined in youth to be plump than the dark-haired inhabitants of the same climate. The Yorkshireman and the Lowlander are generally high cheek-boned and lean. But is it clear that the Queen's remark is intended to signify that Hamlet is literally fat? Does the expression convey any other sense than that in

which a prize-fighter, far from corpulent, would, half-sportively, use it, in order to imply that he is out of training? If, however, the word really did convey to the audience an idea in harmony with the personal appearance of the person who uttered it, Shakespeare, as a practical stage-manager, would have meant it to apply, not to the ideal Dane, but to the flesh-and-blood actor who was performing the part; — as in 'The Midsummer Night's Dream,' the two heroines exchange satirical taunts upon their respective proportions of stature, because of the two youths who performed the parts of Hermia and Helena one was taller, the other shorter, than usual. The jest there would have been unsuccessful, indeed unsafe, if the audience were not prepared for its fitness by the contrast between the two figures bodily before their eyes. But a world of refining criticism might be written to show what subtle distinctions of character — between the tall and the short — Shakespeare designed to intimate in the verbal duel between Hermia and Helena.

Though Goethe wastes so much exquisite ingenuity on the pinguous temperament of Hamlet, no one would have acknowledged more readily than Goethe the general proposition that an author himself is unaware of the best and deepest moral deductions which a reader may draw from his works.

No poem of our age has more perplexed the critics as to its moral design than Goethe's 'Faust.' And what says the poet himself of that design? "They ask me what idea I wished to incorporate in my 'Faust.' Can I know it? Or, if I know, can I put it into words?" And indeed it is upon this fact — viz., that genius in Art cannot, like mastership in Science,

trace step by step the process which leads to its results — that Kant bases the theory by which he distinguishes art from science, and restricts to art the application of the word Genius (the innate quality of the mind — *ingenium*). “Genius,” he says, “cannot of itself describe, nor scientifically demonstrate, how it accomplishes its productions, but it gives the rule by an inspiration of nature, and so the author of a production, for which he is indebted to his genius, knows not himself how the ideas form themselves in his mind. It is not in his power to form the like at his own pleasure and methodically, and to communicate to others, precepts which can enable them to accomplish the like works.”

But, on the other hand, Genius has many conceptions, many subtle beauties of thought, many arcana in occult wisdom, of which it is fully cognisant, and which no critic ever detects.

Certain I am that every author who has written a book with earnest forethought and fondly-cherished designs, will bear testimony to the fact, that much which he meant to convey has never been guessed at in any review of his work; and many a delicate beauty of thought, on which he principally valued himself, remains, like the statue of Isis, an image of truth from which no hand lifts the veil.

The moral effects of writers upon the spirit of a nation must, no doubt, be considerable; yet it is difficult in this to discriminate between the effect which the writers produce on the nation, and the effect which the nation produces on the writers. A people sound at the core will not be corrupted by any meretricious or enervating literature which may be in fashion for

the time. We may certainly presume that the profligate wits, whose plays and lyrics amused Charles II. and his Court, did not form, but were formed by, the manners of a reign which did in reality substitute one revolution for another. The first reaction from revolution *is* revolution. A dominant desire to contrast the austerity of the Puritans could not result in a decorous generation. But the generation passed — with it, the fashionable literature that represented it; and England was ultimately none the worse for the ribaldry of Rochester: let us hope she is to this day the better for the sublimity of Milton.

Where a people is degenerate, it receives from its literature only excuses for its own degeneracy. The softness of Lydian manners, no doubt, served to engender the soft Lydian music. But the music, as it extended its fame among manlier communities, would have seemed to the Lydians to dignify the voluptuous effeminacy of which it was the persuasive expression.

Yet, when the Spartans, in one brief holiday of their martial existence, nationalised Alcman, the most famous of Lydian poets,* all the innovations he introduced into the Doric music — all the licence which he gave to his genius, orientally sensual — did not corrupt the Spartans. Their proudest achievements in history date long after Alcman had joined Linus and Orpheus in the Fields of Asphodel. In their private entertainments the stern lords of the Helot continued to enjoy the gay strains of the Lydian in praise of love and good cheer; but when the State was in

* See Clinton's 'Fasti Hellenici,' and Colonel Mure's 'Critical History,' for the authorities and testimonies in support of the opinion that assigns to Lydia the honour of Alcman's origin and birth-place.

danger, they gathered round the tent of their king to find fitting voice for patriotism and valour in the war-song of Tyrtæus.

The moral effect of writers is unquestionably sometimes the mere echo of the time in which they write. And such writers may, for their season, be exceedingly popular; but the probability is that their fame will not endure. Whether their effect be for good or for evil, it is on the surface of an ever-fleeting society, and not in the depths of our ineffaceable human nature. The writers whose effect on their nation, and, beyond their nation, on the family of mankind, is permanent, are no echoes of their time, nor do they so much influence their own generation as they do the generations that succeed. Helvetius indeed has, with great force and an eloquence often noble, insisted upon the fact that the literature and the spirit of an age move in concert together. "There is an age," he observes truly, "when the word *virtus* in Italy meant both morality and valour; there has been another age when the word *virtu* meant a taste for antiquities and knick-nacks."

But Helvetius, like all enthusiasts of a system, rejects the facts which would militate against his system. He commences his 19th chapter, 'De l'Esprit,' with the dogma, that "the esteem for different kinds of genius is, in every age, proportioned to the interest the people have in esteeming them;" and proceeds thus: "To show the perfect justice of this proposition, let us first take romance for an example. From the publication of 'Amadis' to the present age, that kind of writing has successively experienced a thousand vicissitudes. Would we know the cause? . . . The

principal merit of most of these works depends on the exactness with which they paint the virtues, vices, passions, customs, follies, of a nation. But the manners of a nation change every age. This change must, then, occasion a revolution in taste, and consequently in romance. A nation is, therefore, constantly forced, by the very desire of amusement, to despise in one age what it admired in that which preceded it. What I have said of romance may be applied to almost all other works." The assertion here made is notably untrue; it applies only to indifferent and mediocre works, which perish because they are indifferent or mediocre. And a work that paints the manners of an age essentially different from our own, will be as much admired in our age as in that which gave birth to it, if it deserve such admiration from enduring qualities. The romance of Cervantes describes no manners harmonious to our own, and is more esteemed than any romance which does. Nay, the principal merit of Walter Scott consists in his portraiture of times utterly distinct from the time in which he lived.

In a very corrupt age, a vitiated moral taste may possibly accept a vicious morality as a sound one. But even in societies the most licentious, if a work by a true genius appear, presenting some innocent childlike picture of life and manners, the probability is that it will seize the public attention more firmly than it would have done in simple communities, to whose social characteristics it offered no contrast and implied no rebuke. 'Paul and Virginia' was published in a time perhaps the most cynical and profligate that France herself ever knew, yet its chaste pathetic idyll went straight and irresistibly to the public heart. I

doubt if it would have made so great a sensation in a virtuous age. But this is one instance, among many, in refutation of the axioms of Helvetius, who maintains that genius is so far dependent on manners, that it cannot win popular favour for a work to which the manners of the age are not congenial. And, indeed, in the latter part of the same chapter from which I have quoted, Helvetius, unconsciously to himself, contradicts his own doctrine, because he allows that there are works of which our esteem survives the manners they depicted, by their fidelity to human nature in general. And if this be so, such works would command the esteem of their own age, even if they represented a state of society utterly foreign to that of the age itself.

Yet there are periods when a tendency and spirit in literary compositions, which would be either inoperative or even mischievous in other periods, may become eminently effective and beneficent. For instance, suppose a time when a nation is predisposed to aggressive wars, a literature systematically stimulating the passion for military glory would either be inoperative, because not needed, or mischievous, because adding fuel to a flame already perniciously destructive. But next, suppose a time when a nation, long enervated by peace, has fallen into a drowsy neglect of self-defence — suppose that dangers are gathering round it, with which nothing can cope but the revival of a hardy martial spirit, animating the community to consent to every sacrifice for the security of their native land — then a literature, warlike and fiery, may be that which best evokes the one public virtue, without which all others would be in vain for the conservation of the

body politic, and the most martial poet would, for the moment, be the noblest moralist.

For this reason we must, if we would judge fairly of the moral *intention* of works of genius, take a comprehensive view of the times in which they were composed, and the purposes to which they served. Yet the moral *effect* of all works of a pre-eminent genius will be felt in times beyond his farthest vision, and conduce to purposes unconceived by his profoundest thought. "Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams."*

It may justify the indulgence which, on the whole, we are compelled, whether we will or no, to concede to all varieties of genius in their ethical objects, when we notice the fact that, where genius is pre-eminent, becomes enduring, establishes its products as a part of the 'everlasting possession' which civilisation transmits from age to age, — the good remains and the evil perishes.

Take even the author who, in the judgment of most sober Englishmen, did in his own day the most mischief, and in the most wanton spirit, by writings of which no one can dispute the genius, — I mean Voltaire. Well, not a century has passed since he closed his long career, and, strange to say, the great bulk of the works which most moved his time, is already obsolete and unread. Wit the most lavish has not preserved 'La Pucelle' from disdain; irony the keenest has not sapped one foundation in Christian faith. What of Voltaire remains popular and current? Writings either harmless or morally benignant; school

* Sir Thomas Browne, 'Hydriotaphia.

histories, like those of Charles XII. and Peter the Great; the first suggestive sketch of social history itself in 'L'Esprit des Mœurs;' decorous tragedies constructed with an art which critics commend to the study of genius, and abounding with ethical maxims which preceptors impress on the memories of youth; and a general authority against fanaticism and persecuting bigotry, against oppression and arbitrary law.

Nay, even in his philosophy, while its siege-works against Christian Revelation have so crumbled away that they supply no corner-stone to any system which speculators have since constructed, France still owes to Voltaire's patient labour the knowledge of Newton's 'Principia,' from which she has deduced so many great discoveries of her own. Without Voltaire France might not have known La Place. And even in that special field of controversy, wherein he fought with the infidel against the Cross, while no opponent to Christianity now picks up from the dust those light shafts in which, if the feather remain, the arrow-head is broken, divines themselves yet employ the heavy mace of argument with which he demolished the atheism of Diderot, and defended those two truths which are the columns of every temple — the existence of the Deity and the immortality of the soul.

Again, it is noticeable how much even the fallacies of a great writer serve, not the less effectually, because indirectly, to the advancement of truth, by stimulating the energies of the writers who oppose the fallacies, and, in so doing, strike out new ideas and suggest fresh discoveries. How much his researches into alchemy may have warmed and emboldened the imagination of Newton, in whom imagination seems to have been only

less powerful than reason! It is said with no exaggeration, by Sir William Hamilton, "that the man who gave the whole philosophy of Europe a new impulse and direction, and to whom, mediately or immediately, must be referred every subsequent advance in philosophical speculation, was David Hume." And this less from the partisans he enlisted than from the opponents he aroused. "Accepting his principles from the dominant philosophies of Locke and Leibnitz, and deducing with irresistible evidence these principles to their legitimate result, Hume showed, by the extreme absurdity of these results themselves, either that philosophy altogether was a delusion, or that the individual systems which afforded the premises were erroneous or incomplete. He thus constrained philosophers to the alternative, either of surrendering philosophy as such, or of ascending to higher principles, in order to re-establish it against the sceptical reduction." To Hume we owe the philosophy of Kant, and therefore all that Kant himself has originated in the succeeding philosophies of Germany. To Hume again we owe the philosophy of Reid, and consequently, what is now distinctively known in Europe as the philosophy of the Scottish School,—that school which, in France, originated the intellectual movement that raised up, in Royer-Collard, Victor Cousin, and Maine de Biran, the counterpoise to the disguised materialism which had previously been accepted, with scarcely a question, in the system by which Condillac analysed every faculty into sense. These considerations tend to confirm the wisdom of complete toleration to the freedom of all opinion. Had some mistaken benevolence of intention suppressed the publication of Hume's

sceptical theories, because of the temporary harm they might effect, it would have suppressed also all those great arguments for an immaterial soul in man, which have enlarged and ennobled the whole world of thought. Kant would have continued in "his dogmatic slumber;" Reid would have remained in quiet adhesion to Locke; the materialism of Condillac would still be reigning over the schools of France.

Our obligations to genius, even where it may not mean to be our special benefactor, are so great, that our gratitude is as involuntary as the service it acknowledges. Every genius, it is true, however eminent, may find its hostile critics; but, in spite of the critics, who are frequently right in detail, we continue our homage to every eminent genius on the whole. What should we know to-day, if genius had not been free to guess, right or wrong, through the long yesterday? It was said of Plato, "If he had not erred, he would have done less." The saying does not exaggerate, it falls short of, the truth. For it may rather be said of every great man, "If he had not erred he would have done nothing." And our obligations to genius are the greater, because we are seldom able to trace them. We cannot mount up to the sources from which we derive the ideas that make us what we are. Few of my readers may have ever read Chaucer; fewer still the 'Principia' of Newton. Yet how much poorer the minds of all my readers would be if Chaucer and Newton had never written! All the genius of the past is in the atmosphere we breathe at present. But who shall resolve to each individual star the rays of the heat and the light, whose effects are felt by all, whose nature is

defined by none? This much, at least, we know; that in heat the tendency to equilibrium is constant; that in light the rays cross each other in all directions, yet never interfere the one with the other.

ESSAY XII.

ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ACTIVE THOUGHT
AND REVERIE.

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It is the peculiarity of the human mind that it cannot long, at a stretch, endure the active consciousness of its own operations. "It seems possible," says one of the most modest and cautious of physiologists, "that certain cases of madness depend on a cause which can scarcely exist, even in slight degree without producing some mental disturbance — viz., the too frequent and earnest direction of the mind inwards upon itself — the concentration of the consciousness too long continued upon its own functions."*

It is another peculiarity of the human mind that a man can as seldom say to himself, with success, "Now, I will think exclusively on this or that subject," as he can say to himself, "Now, I will dream of this or that image."

Some writer, I forget at this moment whom, declares that he did not know what it was to think till he got his pen into his hand. Pascal, on the contrary, observes that, "in the very act of writing, his thought sometimes escaped him."** I can recall no moment of my life,

* 'Chapters on Mental Physiology.' By Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.D. Page 77 (2d edition).

** "En écrivant ma pensée, elle m'échappe quelquefois." — 'Pensées de Pascal,' Art. ix.

out of sleep, in which ideas were not passing through my brain; nay, my own experience confirms the assertion of Kant, "that there is no sleep in which we do not dream, and that it is the rapidity with which ideas succeed each other in sleep that constitutes a principal cause why we do not always recollect what we dream."*

But it is one thing to see an undistinguishable crowd — another thing to command its numbers and marshal them into the discipline of an army; one thing to be aware of the images that rise within, and flit from us into space — another thing to form those images into ranks of thought, and direct their march towards a definite object.

Thought, as distinct from Reverie — Thought compact and practical, such as can be stamped into record or concentrated into action — is generally a mechanical involuntary process, the steps of which we are unable to trace. "The understanding, like the eye, while it makes us to see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself."**

* "Lectures on Metaphysics," by Sir W. Hamilton, Bart., vol. I. pp. 318, 319. — "I have myself," says Sir W. Hamilton, "at different times turned my attention to the point, and, as far as my observations go, they certainly tend to prove that during sleep the mind is never inactive or wholly unconscious of its activity." Baxter has some remarks to the same effect, in a passage of his "Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul," which appear to have escaped the notice of more recent metaphysicians. And appended to that passage, there occurs the following note, which forestalls Kant's observation: — "A very remarkable author, writing on this subject, has these words, 'I suppose the soul is never totally inactive. I never awaked, since I had the use of my memory, but I found myself coming out of a dream; and I suppose they that think they dream not, think so because they forget their dreams.'" — M. R. Bankes's 'Defence of the Soul's Immortality.'

** Locke, Introduction to 'Essay on the Human Understanding.'

The mind, in this, greatly needs the help of some accustomed association in the physical structure. It is strange how frequently it contracts some habit of the body by which it seems to give ease to its vent, or gather vigour for its utterance. Every one accustomed to public speaking knows how much the facility with which his thoughts flow into language, and his language expands into eloquence, is increased by the freedom of gesture: it is not only that the action employed by the orator impresses the eye of the audience, but it stimulates and intensifies the thought of the orator himself, so that, if he has long accustomed himself to ungraceful and rugged gesture, though he may be fully aware of his faults. — though, by the aid of an actor, he might exchange his rude spontaneous movement for an artificial elegance — he feels that, were he to do so, his oratory would lose more than it would gain. It would be long before he would cease to be embarrassed by the consciousness of his effort to suppress the defect which custom had made a part of himself; he would long want that thorough self-abandonment which gave to his rude delivery the merit of earnestness, and lent even to faults the beauty of artless passion and genuine impulse.

A counsellor, renowned for the art of his pleading, had a trick of rubbing his spectacle-case while addressing a jury. A foolish attorney who had confided a brief to him thought this action ludicrous, and likely to impair the effect of the pathetic appeals which the nature of the suit admitted. Accordingly, he watched for a sly opportunity, and stole away the spectacle-case. For the first time in his life, the counsellor's tongue faltered — his mind missed the bodily track

with which it had long associated its operations; he became confused, embarrassed — he stammered, blundered, and boggled — lost all the threads of his brief, and was about to sit down, self-defeated, when the conscience-stricken attorney restored the spectacle-case. Straightway, with the first touch of the familiar talisman, the mind recovered its self-possession, the memory its clearness, the tongue its fluency; and as, again and again, the lawyer fondly rubbed the spectacle-case, argument after argument flew forth like the birds from a conjuror's box. And the jury, to whom, a few minutes before, the case seemed hopeless, were stormed into unanimous conviction of its justice. Such is the force of habit. Such the sympathy between mental and bodily associations. Every magician needs his wand; and perhaps every man of genius has — his spectacle-case.

Some of my readers may have witnessed, and many more will have read the account of, the curious effects which Mr. Braid of Manchester produced by what is called "hypnotism," from *ὑπνος* (sleep). Mr. Braid rejected the theories of the mesmeriser and phrenologist, and maintained that he could produce, by action on the muscles, phenomena analogous to those with which the phrenological mesmerist startles the spectators. I saw him thus fascinate to sleep a circle of miscellaneous patients by making each patient fix successively his (or her) eyes upon a lancet-case that the operator held between finger and thumb. And when slumber had been thus induced, without aid of magnetic passes, and merely by the concentration of sight and mind on a single object, Mr. Braid said to me, "Now, observe, I will draw into play the facial

muscles which are set in movement by laughter, and ludicrous images will immediately present themselves to the sleeper." He did so gently to one of the sleepers, an old woman; pushing up the corners of her mouth. Presently the patient burst into laughter so hearty, as to be contagious amongst the audience present; and when asked the cause, told (always in slumber) a droll story of something which had happened to her a few days before, and which the muscular action, excited, had at once brought back to the memory. Next, Mr. Braid drew down the muscles on the wrinkled face of another old lady — bent her head towards the floor, and joined her hands as if in supplication — immediately the poor old creature doled forth "Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners," and, if left long enough to herself, would have gone through all the responses in the Litany. Another touch or two of the enchanter's wand — the head thrown upward, the forehead gently smoothed, the eyebrows lifted — and the same old woman thought she was in heaven, and began to describe the beauties of the angels. I believe that Mr. Braid has in one respect been more fortunate than his fellow *Thaumaturgists*, the *mesmerisers*. He has not been derided as a dupe, nor denounced as an impostor, by sceptical physiologists. His experiments, dating from 1842, have attracted considerable notice in England, and a still more severely critical attention abroad. In France they appear to have been confirmed and extended by the experiments of very eminent and cautious philosophers and physicians.*

* See the chapter on Hypnotism, in M. Maury's comprehensive and enlightened work, '*Le Sommeil et les Rêves*,' p. 243.

Taking it then for granted that no deception was practised, either by himself or his patients, the hypnotism exhibited by Mr. Braid conveys a striking illustration of the instantaneous and involuntary sympathy between the ideas presented to our inward intelligence, and the slightest threads of that external web-work behind which sits the soul vigilant and unseen.

Certain it is that, of the most valuable of our intellectual acquisitions — viz., those which pass from hoarded savings into the grandeur and uses of reproductive capital — we can give no methodical accounts. We can number, indeed, the books we have read and the problems we have conned, but that is only to say where we have obtained the materials of fuel. When and how did the spark fall upon the fuel? When and how did the dull carbo and the dry faggot leap into warmth and blaze? The higher the genius, the less it is conscious of the degrees by which it has ascended. Yet even the most ordinary thinker amongst us would seek in vain to discover the origin and progress of his thoughts. Let him concentrate his attention on that research, keep it there long and earnestly, and — Sir Henry Holland is right! — ten to one but what he will puzzle himself into Bedlam.

And here let me quote some lines by a French poet, admired in the last century and neglected in this, which have been greatly praised by Dugald Stewart for their “philosophical penetration:”

“Enfin dans le cerveau si l’image est tracée,
Comment peut dans un corps s’imprimer la pensée?
Là finit ton œuvre, mortel audacieux,
Va mesurer la terre, interroger les cieux,

De l'immense univers réglé l'ordre suprême,
 Mais ne pretends jamais te connoître toi-même,
 Là s'ouvre sous tes yeux un abîme sans fonds."*

But, no doubt, the cradle and nursery of definite thought is in the hazy limbo of Reverie. There, ideas float before us, rapid, magical, vague, half-formed; apparitions of the thoughts that are to be born later into the light, and run their course in the world of man.

And yet, despite their vagueness and incompleteness, how vivid, how life-like, those apparitions sometimes are! I do not give them the name of thoughts, because as yet they are not singled out of space and subjected to our command. But still they are the souls of thoughts.

That which is most marvellous to me, is the celerity with which, when musing over any truth that one desires to explore, conjecture upon conjecture, image upon image, chase each other, in ever-shifting panorama.

"If," says Marcus Antoninus,** "a man will consider what a vast number of operations the mind performs, what abundance of thoughts and sensations occur in the same moment, he will more readily comprehend how the Divine Spirit of the universe looks over, actuates, governs, the whole mass of creation!" Noble suggestion, in which lie depths of philosophy, from the impersonal pantheism systematised by Spinoza, to the divine omnipresent energy into which the pantheism is sublimely resolved by Newton.

When Kant says that "we can dream more in a

* De Lille, 'L'Imagination,' quoted by Dugald Stewart in Note P. to his Essay 'On some late Philological Speculations.'

** Lib. 6-25.

minute than we can act in a day," it seems to me that he rather understates than exaggerates; for so much is suggested in so small a point of time, that, were it in my power to transcribe all that passes through my mind in any given half hour of silent reverie, it would take me years to write it down. And this leads me to an observation, which doubtless every practised writer must often have made on himself. When, having sufficiently filled the mind with a chosen subject, and formed the clearest possible conceptions of what we intend to say on it, we sit down to the act of writing, the words are never exactly faithful to the preconceived ideas we designed them to express. We may, indeed, give the general purport of a meditated argument; the outlines of a dramatic plot, artistically planned, or of a narrative of which we have painted on the retina of the mind the elementary colours and the skeleton outlines. But where the boundless opulence of idea and fancy which had enriched the subject before we were called upon to contract its expenditure into sober bounds? How much of the fairy gold turns, as we handle it, into dry leaves! And by a tyranny that we cannot resist, while we thus leave unuttered much that we had designed to express, we are carried on mechanically to say much of which we had not even a conscious perception the moment before the hand jotted it down, as an inevitable consequence of the thought out of which another thought springs self-formed and full-grown. Even a writer so attentive to method as Cicero notices the irresistible vehemence with which the things that we think of ravish away the words — "*res ipsæ verba rapiunt*,"* and, in return, the words,

* Cicero, '*De Finibus*,' lib. ii. cap. 5.

as they rise spontaneously, seem to ravish away the thoughts.

This want of exact fidelity between thought while yet in the mind, and its form when stamped on the page, has not escaped the observation of Ancillon, a writer who ought to be better known to our countrymen; for into that wide range of knowledge through which the German scholarship is compelled to range in its tendency to generalise, he carries a sense as practical as Reid's, and an elegance of criticism as sober as Dugald Stewart's. "No language," says this charming philosopher, "is a complete and finished imprint of the human mind, were it only because all that is intellectual and invisible in our understanding, our soul, complete and entire, is not and cannot be expressed, except by metaphors borrowed from the world of the senses (*du Monde Sensible*). . . . Where a man feels and thinks with a certain force, he cannot be content with his expressions — they say always too much or too little."*

In truth, I believe that no author, writing on a subject he has long cherished and intensely pondered over, at whatever length, or with whatever brevity, will not find that he has made but a loose paraphrase, not a close copy, of the work forewritten in the mind. All thoughts, and perhaps in proportion to their gravity and scope, lose something when transferred from contemplation into language, as all bodies, in proportion to their bulk, lose something of what they weighed in air when transferred to water.

* 'Essais de Philosophie, de Politique, et de Littérature.' Par Frederic Ancillon, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres de Prusse. 'Des Developpemens du Moi Humain.' Vol. i. pp. 77, 78.

Musing over these phenomena in my own mind, whereby I find that, in an art to which I have devoted more than thirty years' practice and study, I cannot in any way adequately accomplish my own conception; that the typical idea within me is always far, infinitely far, beyond my power to give it on the page the exact image which it wore in space; that I catch from the visible light but a miserable daguerreotype of the form of which I desire the truthful picture — a caricature that gives indeed features, and lines, and wrinkles, but not the bloom, not the expression, not the soul of the idea which the love in my own heart renders lovely to me; — musing over this wondrous copiousness of thought which escapes from me, scattering into spray as a cataract yields but drops to the hand that would seize it amidst its plashes and fall, I say to myself, "Herein I recognise that necessity for another life and other conditions of being, amid which alone thought can be freed and developed. It is in the incapacity and struggle, more than in any feat or victory, of my intellect, that I feel my thought itself is a problem only to be solved in a hereafter. At present, the more I labour to complete such powers as are vouchsafed to me, the more visible to myself is my own incompleteness. And it is the sense of that incompleteness which, increasing on me in proportion as I labour for completeness, assures me, in an ulterior destination, of a wider scope and less restricted powers. "Nature never disappoints — the Author of Nature never deceives us."* If the child yet unborn "were qualified to reason of his prospects in the womb of his parent, as he may afterwards do in his range on this terrestrial globe, he might

* Chalmers's 'Bridgewater Treatise,' vol. II. p. 14.

apprehend, in his separation from the womb, a total extinction of life; for how could he continue to receive it after his only supply of nourishment from the vital stock of his parent had ceased?"* Poor Unborn! — what a sceptic he might be! How notably he might argue against a future state for him! And how would that future state be best prognosticated to his apprehension? Surely it would be by referring him to those attributes of his organisation which had no necessary relation to his present state, but conveyed hints of use for a future state; in the structure of eyes meant to see a light not yet vouchsafed, of ears meant to hearken to sounds not yet heard. As the eyes and the ears to the Unborn, are those attributes of the human Mind on this earth which for this earth are not needed — on this earth have no range, no completion. And to Man we may say, as to the Unborn, "WARR! Nothing is given to you in vain. Nature is no spendthrift; she invents nothing for which no use is designed. These superfluous accessories to your being now, are the essential provisions for your felicity and development in a state of being to come."

* Dr. Ferguson. The passage cited in the text, with additional reasonings too long to cite, is noticed with deserved compliment by Chalmers ('Bridgewater Treatise,' vol. II. p. 127). But Chalmers is evidently unaware that Ferguson's illustration is borrowed wholesale from Sir John Davies's noble poem 'On the Immortality of the Soul.'

"These children [viz. the unborn in the womb], if they had some use of sense,

And should by chance their mothers' talking hear,
That in short time they shall come forth from thence,
Would fear their birth more than our death we fear:
They would cry out, 'If we this place shall leave,
Then shall we break our tender navel-strings;
How shall we then our nourishment receive,
Since our sweet food no other conduit brings?'" &c.

13*

For Man, every present contains a future. I say not with Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," but rather, "I am, therefore I think; I think, and therefore I shall be."

ESSAY XIII.

ON THE SPIRIT IN WHICH NEW THEORIES SHOULD
BE RECEIVED.

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MUCH is said by innovators in complaint of the obstinate resistance they encounter from the professors of the special branch of human knowledge which an innovation is proposed to correct or to expand. The physician in high repute is the most stubborn opponent of some new pathological theory. The lawyer who is an authority in the Courts looks with jealous apprehension on the crotchets of a jurisprudent who never held a brief. Philosophy itself, in which every system received to-day has grown out of innovations on the system in vogue yesterday, is the sturdiest opponent a speculator has to encounter, when he asks the public to accept some interpretation, or even to believe in some phenomenon of nature, which philosophers would have much to unlearn before they could admit to be philosophical. This complaint is immemorial, and was made in Athens, where the genius of innovation was tolerably audacious, not less loudly by the disciples of Anaxagoras, than it is, nowadays, by those who would ask a Brodie to acknowledge the curative effects of homœopathy, or a Faraday to convince himself that, in spite of the laws of motion, a table will jump from one end of the room to the other without being impelled by some cognate material force. And the complaint being

so ancient, and, notwithstanding our boasted exemption from the intolerance of our prejudiced forefathers, just as frequent in our age as in any age of the past, it is probable that there is something in the organisation of all societies which tends to the advancement of intellectual progress by the very caution with which the recognised leaders of the time receive suggestions to deviate into unaccustomed paths.

No river would be navigable were its velocity not checked by friction; and the friction increases as the stream proceeds, until the flow is thus made the easy thoroughfare of interchange. One man may be sure of a truth, but before all men can accept it as truth from his *ipse dixit*, many men must resist and oppose it.

In political science, the necessity of this resistance to pressure is constantly disputed, but never disputed by one politician worthy the name of statesman. All communities which advance durably and safely, contain, like Nature herself, two antagonistic powers — the one inert and resisting, the other active and encroaching. If the former be too stubborn, as it is in communities that establish hereditary castes, there can be no progress beyond the limit at which each subdivision of mental labour has been fixed in rigid monotony by a former age. Such societies may last long, but it is the longevity of a centenarian, who, whether he continue on earth five years or fifty years longer, will exhibit nothing remarkable beyond the fact that he is still alive. He holds his existence on the condition of shunning the least disturbance to the chronic mechanism of his habits.

On the other hand, where societies interpose no

hindrance to any new innovation which may, for the moment, seize on the popular humour, or be urged by a popular genius, there we may as surely predict their rapid exhaustion, as we could that of the Thames itself, if the power of friction were not opposed to the velocity of fluids. To take a familiar illustration: the first French Revolution was the headlong rush of liberty unchecked; when the Revolution stopped, liberty had run itself out. And ever since, under the bleak fissures through which it burst, and amidst the vast fragments that, whirled from its banks, became the obstructions to its course, it is only here and there that pools, deep but stagnant, reflect the ruins made by the former torrent.

As in bodies politic, so in all the departments of thought amongst which intellectual life is distributed, there must be, for safe and continuous progress, a principle that delays innovation! For by delay truth ripens — falsehoods rot. "There is," says Chalmers, finely, "a great purpose served in society by that law of nature in virtue of which it is that great bodies move slowly."* Therefore, it is not only excusable but praiseworthy, in those who are esteemed the especial guardians of knowledge, to regard with a certain jealousy all proposals to exchange the old lamps for new. But still there is no truth so venerable but what was once a novelty. And a man loves something or other better than he does truth, if he refuse to investigate any proposition professing to embody a new truth, however unfamiliar to his belief, however militant against his theories. "For my part," said one of the

* Chalmers's 'Bridgewater Treatise' — Chapter on the Connection between the Intellect and the Emotions.

most candid, and one of the most suggestive, of English philosophers — “for my part, as well persuaded as I am that two and two make four, if I were to meet with a person of credit, candour, and understanding, who should seriously call it in question, I would give him the hearing.”*

Suppose that a philosopher is in doubt as to the length of a telescope in a friend's possession, and that ten persons, of whose general veracity there is no question, tell him that they have measured the telescope, and it is twenty feet long, he will accept their evidence, and cease to entertain a doubt as to the length of the telescope. But suppose this same philosopher had arrived at the conclusion that the moon is incapable of harbouring any form of organic life, and the same ten persons, whose evidence he has just accepted in a matter on which no pride of science is involved, tell him that they have been looking through a telescope at the moon, and that they all, one after the other, have seen an enormous creature endowed with organic life — they entreat the philosopher to come and see this phenomenon himself, — would the philosopher be justified in saying, “I shall not deign to take any such idle trouble. I have satisfied myself that no such creature can possibly exist in the moon. Your declaration is against the laws of Nature; excuse me if against the laws of Nature I can accept no evidence, however respectable. It is within the laws of Nature that you ten gentlemen should tell a falsehood, or be deceived by an optical illusion. I accept either of these hypotheses as possible, and I will not debase the

* Abraham Tucker's ‘*Light of Nature*,’ e. xi. sect. 34. (On Judgment).

dignity of science by examining into that which I know to be impossible:" Would the philosopher be justified in saying this?

Certainly, he would not be justified by any affection for truth. He would be a bigot from the motive most common to bigots — viz., inordinate self-esteem. But perhaps it may be said that no genuine philosopher would have so replied. Pardon me, that answer would have been a warrantable deduction from the philosophy of Hume. When Hume speaks of the wonders, or, as he calls them, "miracles," wrought at the tomb of Abbé Paris, the famous Jansenist, he says, "Where shall we find such a number of circumstances agreeing to the corroboration of one fact? And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events which they relate? And this surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation." Scarcely so; for what we call impossible in matters of fact deposed by numerous witnesses, not interested in the fabrication of a lie, is merely a something opposed to our own experience. And if a philosopher is to pronounce for himself what is impossible and what is not, there would soon be no philosophy at all. When the Indian prince asserted it to be impossible that water could become solid, it was because that assertion was opposed to his experience. But in spite of his experience, it was not only possible; it was a positive fact: and I cannot agree with Hume, that the King of Siam's incredulity was "reasonable." Modern physiology has given some solution of those "miracles" at the Jansenist's tomb, which Hume at once declared needed no other refutation than that of

their own miraculous nature. Cures that baffle science are effected by imagination. Allow for the inevitable additions which all stories receive as they pass from lip to lip, and not least the stories of unusual occurrences, and the cures wrought at the Jansenist's tomb are facts; marvels if you please, yet not miracles. Certainly Newton would not have so answered, because he never refused to examine. He "was prepared at any moment to abandon his theory." "When Bradley and others had observed a certain rotation of the earth which they could not account for, and were thinking it destroyed entirely the Newtonian system, they were under the greatest difficulty how to break it to Sir Isaac, and proceeded to do so by degrees in the softest manner." What was his only answer? "It may be so; there is no arguing against facts and experiments." He did not reply that Bradley's discovery was impossible, because it was against the laws of Nature — as those laws were interpreted by the Newtonian system. But it is more convenient to philosophers to deny the evidence of facts and experiments which oppose their system, than it is, on the strength of the evidence, to examine the facts and test the experiments; — more consonant to "the dignity of science" to say "Impossible," with Hume, than "It may be so," with Newton.

Now, had my philosopher who had decided on the laws of Nature as affecting the products of the moon, replied to the ten witnesses of the alleged creature in that orb, "It may be so; at the same time, my persuasions to the contrary are so strong that I must judge for myself," and then looked through the telescope with inquisitive, anxious eyes, perhaps he might have

found the wonder explicable, and his system unharmed. He might, indeed, have beheld the monster whose existence seemed to destroy his theory; but discovered, on careful scrutiny, that it was no inhabitant of the moon, but a blue-bottle fly that had got on the glass, and, viewed through the magnifier, seemed bigger than a dragon.

Possibly, if a philosopher who possessed in an equal degree the virtue of candour and the acuteness of science, would condescend to examine, as Bacon and Newton would unquestionably have examined, some of the modern thaumaturgia recorded by witnesses whose evidence would decide any matter of fact in any court of law, — possibly he might either make an immense progress in our knowledge of the laws of nature, or prevent incalculable mischief in the spread of a new superstition. If he say, "What you tell me is impossible — I will not stoop to examine," he abandons the field to those who examine, deprived of the guide which his science should be to them; if he come to examine with old-fashioned notions drawn from the last century's stupid materialism, which any youth of our time, fit to mature into physiologist or metaphysician, knows to be obsolete rubbish, — he may call himself a philosopher; — posterity will call him some hard name or another; certainly not philosopher. But if he say quietly, with Newton, "It may be so — there is no arguing against facts and experiments;" I dare not say that, when you all, being respectable, intelligent men, agree that you see a monster in the moon, you are liars or idiots; but before I believe in the monster, you must permit me to examine the

telescope;" — then the philosopher is indeed a philosopher; and then he may find, and then he may prove, to the satisfaction of all whom the portent appalled, that the monster in the moon is a blue-bottle fly on the lens.

ESSAY XIV.

ON ESSAY-WRITING IN GENERAL, AND THESE ESSAYS
IN PARTICULAR.

ON ESSAY-WRITING IN GENERAL, AND THESE ESSAYS IN PARTICULAR.

"THERE is no peculiarity in Montaigne which more called forth the censure of his earlier critics than the frequent want of correspondence between the subject-matter of his discourse, and the title prefixed to it.

"Witness," says one of the friendliest of his commentators, — "Witness the Essays 'On the History of Spurina,' 'On some Verses of Virgil,' 'On Vanity,' 'On Physiognomy,' &c.; in these the author incoherently rambles from one subject to another without any order or connection."

Now, whether this peculiarity in Montaigne be really a fault or not, there is no doubt that, in him, it is not to be ascribed to the want of premeditation and care. With all his vivacity, Montaigne was essentially artistic, sparing no pains to do his best for the work to which his genius was the best adapted.

If in each succeeding edition of his Essays he did not materially correct what had been already written, it was because, as he tells us, — "Writers should well consider what they do before they give their wares to the light — they have no excuse for haste — who hastens them?" But though he so deliberately weighed the substance and so elaborately settled the form of sentences once set in type, that he found no cause to

recast them, — still, in each succeeding edition he interpolated new sentences rich with new illustrations from riper experience or extended scholarship. So that his style, as it now comes down to us, has been compared to a pearl necklace, in which all the pearls were originally of equal size, but to which, from time to time, pearls much larger have been added, increasing the value of the necklace, but impairing the symmetry of the setting.

But it is evident from his own frank avowals that Montaigne deliberately resolved, at the first, upon that freedom of movement, that licence of "leap and skip," which he continued with unabated vivacity to the last. "I go out of the way," he says, "but it is rather from a wantonness than heedlessness. I love the poetic ramble by leaps and skips — it is an art, as Plato says — light, nimble, and a little maddish." He proceeds to defend himself by the authority of his acknowledged model among the ancient writers. "There are," he observes, "pieces in Plutarch, where he forgets his theme, — where the proposition of his argument is only found by incidence, and stuffed throughout with foreign matter. Good God! how beautiful then are his variations and frolicsome sallies, and then most beautiful when they seem to be fortuitous and introduced for want of heed. It is the inattentive reader that loses my subject, and not I: there will always be found some phrase or other in a corner, that is to the purpose, though it lie very close." *

It is clear from all this that Montaigne wrote as great artists do write — viz., from an unerring percep-

* Montaigne, 'Of Vanity,' Cotton's Translation, Revised Edition, 1776.

tion of that which was most suitable to his own genius, and let me add, of that which may be less evident to the commonplace order of critics — viz., the true theory and spirit of the kind of work which had engaged his forethought and concentrated his study.

For in the art of essay-writing there appear to be two extremes necessarily opposed to each other — towards one or the other of which the intermediate varieties of that class of composition tend to gravitate — firstly, the essay which is in spirit and form didactic, and sets forth a definite proposition, to be established by logical reasoning and connected argument. In such essays, addressed rigidly to the understanding, the personality of the writer disappears. In a treatise on the Circulating Medium, on the Comparative Populousness of the Ancient States, on some vexed point in political economy, statistics, moral science, &c., the author, even where his name gives to his opinions a recognised authority, must not distract your attention from his argument by attempts to engage your interest in himself. Directly opposed to this species of essay is that in which the writer does not profess to enforce any abstract proposition by sustained ratiocination, but rather pours forth to the reader, as he would to an intimate friend, his individual impressions and convictions, his sentiments, his fancies; not imposing on you a schoolman's doctrine, but imparting to you a companion's mind. He does not sternly say to you, "You should think this or that;" but rather, "This or that is what I think, fancy, or feel." As the first-mentioned kind of essay, addressed solely to the understanding, is inherently didactic in the substance, so it is essentially prosaic in the style. Whatever the elegance of its

periods, whatever the felicity of its ornaments, still the elegance is that of appropriate lucidity in statement and polished vigour in reasoning; and the ornament is only felicitous, where, like the golden enrichment of the Milanese coats of steel, it renders more conspicuous the sterner metal on which it bestows an additional value. But the second kind of essay has in it much of the generical spirit of poetry. And so Montaigne himself very justly conceived, implying the excuse for his own playful licences, where alone it ought to be sought, and where his critics had neglected to look for it — viz., in the truth that poetical genius of high order will have its way, and though its mode of expression may dispense with verse, it can never be justly understood if it be only looked on as prose. “A thousand poets,” says Montaigne, in treating of his own compositions, “creep in the prosaic style; but the best old prose (and I strew it here, up and down, indifferently for verse) shines throughout, and has the lusty vigour and boldness of poetry, not without some air of its frenzy. . . . I mean that the matter should distinguish itself; it sufficiently shows where it changes, where it concludes, where it begins, and where it rejoins, without interweaving it with words of connection, introduced for the service of dull and inattentive ears.”* And the kind of poetry to which such form of essay belongs, is that which is most opposed to the didactic, and may be described in the words by which Hegel has defined the character of lyrical poetry in its difference from the epic.

“That,” says this exquisite critic, “which the lyrical

* Montaigne, ‘Of Vanity,’ Cotton’s Translation, Revised Edition, 1776.

poetry expresses in the subjective, — the interior world, the sentiments, the contemplations, and the emotions of the soul; instead of retracing the development of an action, its essence and its final goal are the expression of the interior movements of the mind of the individual. . . . It is the personal thought, the internal sentiment and contemplation, in whatsoever they have truthful and substantial. And the poet expresses them as his own thought, his passion peculiar to himself, his personal disposition, or the result of his reflections."

Apply this definition to the Essays of Montaigne, and it fits as exactly as it does to the Odes of Horace. Elsewhere I have called Montaigne the Horace of Essayists — an appellation which appears to me appropriate, not only from the subjective and personal expression of his genius, but from his genial amenity; from his harmonious combination of sportiveness and earnestness; and, above all, from the full attainment of that highest rank in the subjective order of intellect, when the author, in the mirror of his individual interior life, glasses the world around and without him, and, not losing his own identity, yet identifies himself with infinite varieties of mankind.

Just as Shakespeare has precedence over all poets who deal with the objective, inasmuch as his own personality is so abnegated or concealed that it needs much patient study in the observer who endeavours to ascertain Shakespeare's individual opinions and beliefs apart from those which he puts into the lips of his characters, so Montaigne's precedence over all essayists who have regarded nature and life from the subjective point of view is maintained by the hardy frankness with which he carries out to the extreme the lyrical

characteristic of individualised personality. That which is called his egotism forms the charm and the strength of his genius. And here it is that he stands alone, because no other essayist has united the same courage in self-exposition with the same close family resemblance to the generality of mankind. Rousseau or Cardan may be as confidently egotistical as Montaigne, but they present to us in their personalities creatures so exceptional, so unlike the general character of mankind, that they appear almost abnormal, and we are not even sure that they are thoroughly sane.

Between these two opposed schools in essay — viz., that which argues, like Hume, for a specific proposition, and that which, like Montaigne, rather places before the reader the thoughts and sentiments of an individual mind — there are many gradations, in which both schools are more or less mingled, and to which, therefore, I give the name of the Mixed Essay. In Bacon's Miscellaneous Essays there is little logical argument; but there is a laconic adherence to the thesis set out, maintained by sententious assertion on the authority and *ipse dixit* of the writer, who thereby rather insinuates than proclaims his personality: with Johnson the personality is somewhat more obtruded, and the assertion more supported by argument: with Addison the distinctions between the two classes of composition are more obviously preserved. In the Essay on the 'Pleasures of Imagination,' for instance, Addison is almost wholly scholastic and objective, arguing his question as a truth deduced from principles exterior to his own personal impressions; but in the Essay on 'Superstition' ('Spectator,' 12), or on 'Professions' ('Spec-

tator,' 21), there is little more than what we may assume to be the lyrical effusion of his own contemplations and reflections. The charming *Essays of Elia* are almost wholly of the latter description. Their egotism is chastened and subdued, but their personality is never relinquished: it is not philosophy that selects its problem, and proceeds to solve it—it is Charles Lamb who, philosophising through whim and fancy, allures you to listen to Charles Lamb.

These humble lucubrations are necessarily of the mixed or eclectic school of Essay. I am too English—that is, too shy to become the candid reporter of myself, and emulate the courageous confidence in the sympathy of his reader with which Montaigne dilates on his personal habits and his constitutional ailments. Neither do I desire so to contract my experience, and so to reject the free play of speculation and fancy, as to move undeviatingly along the straight line of logic towards some abstract proposition. It is not every bird that flies as the crow flies towards its food or its nest. Unquestionably, herein I retain my personality, because without it all other kind of essay than the argumentative and scholastic would be characterless and lifeless. In fiction the writer rarely speaks for himself; when he does so, it is but episodically—covertly—without giving us any tangible guarantee of his individual sincerity. In politics, and indeed in all polemics, the disputant argues for a cause, and in so doing it is better to cite any other authority than his own. But in monologues of this kind it is a mind, and a heart, and a soul that are honestly giving out to the world what they have imbibed from experience, through the varied process of observation, reflection,

outward survey, and interior contemplation. Certainly many may say, "What care we what this man thinks, fancies, feels, believes, or questions? His opinions or sentiments are in no account with us. If he affirms, 'I will prove a truth,' we will listen to him, not for his sake, but for the sake of the truth. But when he merely says, 'I think, I feel,' a fico for his thoughts and his feelings!"

Certainly many may so say, and I have no right to blame them. I can only reply, with all possible meekness, that I entertain no such contempt for the mind of any fellow-man; that to me no class of reading is more pleasant, and not many classes of literature more instructive, than that in which a man, who has lived long enough in the world of men and of books to have acquired a wide experience of the one, and gathered some varied stores for reflection from the other, imparts to me the results to which one mind arrives from lengthened and diversified interchange with many minds. I need not necessarily take him as a judge upon matters of controversy; but at least I may form my own judgment the better by admitting him as a witness. I do not ask him to be always saying something new. If, having wit or courage enough to say something new (than which nothing is more easy), he yet, after the siftings and weighings of his own unbiassed judgment, arrives at a conclusion as old as a proverb, I am pleased to find a fresh corroboration of some belief which I have been accustomed to cherish as a truth.

Charmed with observing in Degerando's 'Comparative History of the Systems of Philosophy,' the reflected image of his own life and thought from youth, Goethe

exclaims, in that careless strength with which he flings abroad solid masses of truth, — “The great thing, after all, is to know on which side we stand, and where.”

Thus it never occurs to me, in the composition of these Essays, to aim at that praise for originality which is readily obtained by any writer who embodies paradoxes hostile to common sense in language perverse of common English. I know that I cannot fail to say much that is original, whether I will or not, because I am here simply expressing my own mind, as formed by life and by reading. No other human being in the world can have gone through the same combinations of experience in life, or the same range of choice in reading. Therefore, whatever its general resemblance to others, still in many respects my mind must be peculiar to myself, and the expression of it must in many respects be original. It is so with every man, whatever the degree of his talents, who has lived variously and read largely. He may not be original when he deals with fiction; for invention there is intuitive, is genius, the gift of the gods. But when he is not inventing a fable, nor imagining beings who never existed, and going utterly out of himself to assign to them motives he never experienced, and actions he never committed; — when, in short, he is merely taking off the stamp of his own mind, there can be no other impression wholly like it, and he is original without genius and without labour.

In fiction, I am nothing if I do not invent; that cannot critically be called a novel which does not artistically convey a novelty; but in this confessional of thought I say what I think, indifferent whether it be new or old. Though I may come to conclusions to

which millions have arrived before, and in passing onward to those conclusions may utter much which thousands have already uttered, yet I am not the less sure that, here and there, I shall chance upon combinations of ideas which have never hitherto been so combined, and that there is not a single one of these Essays in which some remarks wholly original will not be found by a reader to whom a fair degree of knowledge has taught the required justice of observation. He who accuses me, herein, of the want of originality, accuses himself of that want of discrimination which comes from carelessness or ignorance. "There are things," says Goethe, "which you do not notice, only because you do not look at them." All the leaves in an oak tree, all the faces in a flock, are the same to the ordinary eye; but the naturalist can find no two leaves exactly alike, and the shepherd can distinguish every face in his flock by some original peculiarity.

I leave it to professed philosophers to group certain facts together, and then form them into a definitive system. Schelling, while showing how unstable, shifting, evanescent all systems are, still thinks it essential to pure reasoning that a sage must make choice of a system which, as it were, holds together the threads of his argument, and converges the rays of his thought.

"System," says Sir William Hamilton, "is only valuable when it is not arbitrarily devised, but arises naturally out of the facts, and the whole facts, themselves. On the other hand, to despise system is to despise philosophy; for the end of philosophy is the detection of unity."

Certainly I do not despise philosophy; but I cannot

help remarking how much Time despises system. To the system of Locke, more rigidly narrowed by Condillac, and culminating in Hume, succeeds the system of Reid. From the system of Reid grows the system of Kant; from the system of Kant emanates the system of Schelling, the system of Hegel — whatever other new system may now be rising into vogue. Systems spring up every day, wither down, and again effloresce. Scarcely does Lamarck seem defunct and forgotten, ere, out-Lamarcking Lamarck, appears Darwin! Sir William Hamilton, exulting in this perpetual transmutation of systems in the crucible of Time, exclaims, with grave enthusiasm, "As experiment results from the experiment it supersedes, so system is destined to generate system in a progress never attaining, but ever approximating to, perfection." But this progress consists in periodical retrogressions; — if it approximate to perfection, it is always harking back to some system dismissed long ago as wholly imperfect. Perplexed by the phenomena of hypnotism, mesmerism, and the like thaumaturgia, physiology (at least in the more progressive schools of the Continent) has recurred for its most valuable hints to the mysticism of Alexandrian Platonists, who are again taken down from their shelves to corroborate "a system." Within the last twenty years, Van Helmont has become once more an authority; and there is scarcely a new work treating of psychology which the inquirers of France and Germany have lately put forth, wherein the great discoverer of gas is not quoted with respect. M. Maury, accounting rationally for the phenomena ascribed to magic, vulgarly confounded with conjuring or imposture, says, with simple truth, "The secret of magic is to be sought

in physiology" — viz., it is centred in rare effects, producible on certain constitutions. But that is no discovery; it had been said before by the sages of antiquity, and the illuminati of the middle ages.

The whole tendency of philosophy at this moment on the Continent is towards a return to philosophies long neglected. What a reaction is silently going on towards Aristotle! I see amongst the most "progressive" schoolmen of Europe the rise of scaffoldings for the restoration of antique thrones.

Where innovation is boldest, it is often in reducing a number of complex ideas, which have been, as it were, the crystallisations of Time round an original monad, back to the monad itself, and so leaving it to Time to crystallise the monad again.

Bichat materialised the old triple divisions of life — the animal, the rational, the spiritual — into the two forms, "life organic and life vegetable." Tissot, nowadays, rejects all divisions whatsoever, and in that search for unity which our great Scotch metaphysical critic calls "the end of philosophy," consolidates and cramps all that we think, feel, and imagine, into one absolute unity — LIFE. Notable discovery! which, in plain words, simply means this, Life is life! Probably that much was known before the Egyptians had founded a college, or the Chaldees consulted a star.

The systems of Newton and Bacon still keep their ground, but not unassailed. Time already, though as yet with no noisy strides, is on his march against them. Whoever is somewhat familiar with the speculative reasonings of Continental Europe in these later days, will find audacious questionings even of the doctrine of gravitation, and still more daring assertions that the

Baconian system of induction is not only inapplicable to those problems which man most desires to solve, but, if adhered to inflexibly, would leave our own nature the most hopeless of riddles. Certainly I say not that these temerarious besiegers of the only two systems of modern thought which are still standing, seemingly strong and secure, on the last boundaries of human reason, have embraced a cause which established philosophy should even deign to examine; or that, by marching with them, we shall "approximate towards perfection." I dare not presume to conjecture a flaw in the codes of a Newton or Bacon; but this I do venture to predicate, that sooner or later the ranks of the besiegers will swell, and carry the day. New systems will replace for a time even those of the 'Novum Organum' and 'Principia.' But two thousand years after that victory, the 'Novum Organum' and 'Principia' will again be re-aired and well dusted, and set up in the schools as the only sound systems; they will then be called novelties, "approximating towards perfection." Time sees the systems pass and re-pass, emerge and vanish, re-arise and re-wane, with a calm and contemptuous indulgence. But that which Time does retain everlastingly in honour, is the philosopher's thought, apart from his system.

The thought of Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, stands aloft and imperishable, though we scarce see even the wrecks of their systems, the sites which they occupied have been so built upon. It is with them as with cities, in which the unity of a thought goes with the unity of a name. London conjures up the one idea of a London, though three Londons at least be buried under our streets. When lately I read through the

completed edition of Descartes — which for the first time gives to convenient and familiar survey the whole structure of that mind which the bold thinker tells us he built up for himself — comparing the grandeur and soundness of his detached ideas with the puerilities and crotchets of his system, I could not help exclaiming, “How could this absolute king ever pass from his throne to a school!” Let those reasoners who cannot think except upon system, fasten thought to a system, as men who plant trees tie their stems to a stake. The cord will rot away; the stake will perish. Even if cord and stake answered their purpose for the time, still the tree, needing them no more, lifts itself into air, freed from the prop it has outgrown. For myself, I do not pretend to be a philosopher; and if I did, I know of no sect of philosophy to which I could unreservedly give a disciple’s adhesion. I do not presume to call myself even a scholar — illustrious and venerable name; but I am, and have been for years — which should have given some compensations in experience for all that they have borne away from me in hope — a student of life and of books; and that which in such study has become part and parcel of my mind, be it old, be it new, be it a truth or a fallacy, I gossip forth in these Essays. I have known the public so long that I cannot but regard it as a friend. Alas! how few friendships are left to me half as long, half as intimate, as that which I claim with myself, O my Reader! As I talk to those I know best, so I write here. I affect not to dictate; my desire is to suggest.

If I may judge by the letters I have received on the different subjects broached in these miscellanies —

many of such letters being from men whom it most flatters a writer to class amongst his readers — I venture to hope that I have not wholly failed in my aim. For I observe, that whether my correspondent express concurrence in or dissent from some idea that he herein met with — that idea, whatever its worth or want of worth, has suggested independent tracks of idea to himself. Who, on retracing the history of his own mind, does not feel how much he owes to some writer, perhaps comparatively obscure, or some guess, little heeded by others, which chanced to suggest a something that it made him restless to prove or disprove to himself? "*Non fingor hypotheses*," said Newton, with a scorn we revere in a Newton, to whom scorn was so rare. Still, if Newton disdained an hypothesis, he rejoiced in a guess. What are his queries but guesses? And let strict mathematicians forgive me, but he who rests contented with Newton's solutions can advance no farther. A realm of thought wide enough for a hundred centuries may be found in his queries. His solutions prove, and there end. His queries suggest: where finds suggestion a limit?

If, then, some tyrannical Afrite, wroth with my modest disavowal of system, or my arrogant pretensions to suffer my thoughts to grow without cord and stake, should say to me, "System of some kind thou shalt choose," my system should be the suggestive, because it is given to few men to prove, and to all men to suggest.

Let me explain the word suggestive. Thought is valuable in proportion as it is generative. If vital itself, though it be but a germ, it vitalises thoughts in others which may bloom into petals, or mature into

fruits not vouchsafed to the thinker in whom it originates. I cast my thoughts freely abroad; let the winds waft them loose. It is according to the soil on which they fall that they will be sterile or fertile. The best education is that which wakes up the mind to educate itself. He who adopts a system imposes on his ideas a limit. "This is my system," cries Square or Thwackum. "Take all or take nought; it is one welded whole, indivisible." There is no welded whole possible to man's mind, if the mind means to grow. The whole of to-day is a part, and a vanishing part, in every intellect that has before it a morrow. Better some stray playful thought that comes in unawares, through the open doors of our own unsuspecting thinking, and calls up our own reason to examine the face of the stranger, and judge for itself whether to banish or welcome him, than a regiment of thoughts billeted upon us, expelling our own ideas out of their accustomed rooms, foreigners with whom we have no familiar language, and who, in leaving us, will be succeeded by some other detachment as foreign and as oppressive.

All schools of thought with the *verba magistri*, by which their disciples must swear, are finite and therefore mutable. To embrace as infallible any one system concocted by fallible men, is to exchange our own bold and teeming inventions for formulæ that say, "Think for yourselves no more! These are the rules, from which deviations are errors. These fix the last boundaries of invention, for these are the consummation of truth."

I come then to your hearth, O my Reader, an unpretending visitor.—privileged to say frankly what

I doubt, believe, or deny, yet imposing no dogmas of doubt, belief, or denial on yourself; but if, while I converse, I stir up your own mind to examine what *you* believe, doubt, or deny, my task is accomplished. I ask no simple man to get up from his easy-chair, and say, "Here comes a philosopher;" but if, after hearing me, as he sits undisturbed, he feels inclined to philosophise, I steal away and leave him to muse. Man, after all, must think for himself, or he does not complete his own intellectual existence — he does but reflect another man's.

To learn how to form letters in a copy-book is one thing, to learn how to express your own ideas is another thing. Education commences with a system — that is, with the writing-master. A teacher comes to you with ruler and copy-book, jots down a neat moral saw, or an arithmetical proposition, "Honesty is the best policy," or "Three times three make nine." Copy these dogmas in round hand, without a blot, and the writing-master pats you on the head — says, "Good boy," and departs. And if you have no other teacher, a boy, good or bad, you will remain till you die. But after him of the ruler and copy-book there comes the suggester. By that time you write running-hand, and have got beyond copying another man's dogma, though it may be as useful and as true as the propositions that "Honesty is the best policy," and "Three times three make nine," and the suggester says, "Write a theme!" "What the subject?" "Any you please, no matter how trite — 'The beauties of spring,' 'The shortness of life.'"

"And how shall I write it?" asks the diffident pupil. Is the suggester a wise one? Then he answers,

"I start but the subject. Think for yourself and write."

As the theme-suggester, compared to the writing-master, is the man who says, "Think for yourself — I start but the subject," — to the man who says, "Copy without a blot what I dictate to you."

Think for thyself, O my Reader. Even if thou acceptest a school, in which to walk in the beaten track made by thinkers before thee is called "safe thinking," unroll any chart of a kingdom or province, and note how narrow and thin are the lines of the highways compared to the country around them — how little thou canst see of the country, if thou never turn aside from the road. When thou gazest on the track of light which the moon makes on the ocean, that track to thy vision seems the one luminous path through the measureless waste of the darkness around it; but alter the course of thy bark, and the track shifts with the course — those waves illumined which before were rayless, and those in darkness which before were bright. For the dark and the light vary still with thine own point of vision; and, in truth, the moon favours not one wave more than another. Truth makes on the ocean of nature no one track of light — every eye looking on finds its own.

ESSAY XV.

THE SANGUINE TEMPERAMENT.



THE SANGUINE TEMPERAMENT.

WE are always disposed to envy the man of a hopeful temper; but a hopeful temper, where it so predominates as to be the conspicuous attribute, is seldom accompanied with prudence, and therefore seldom attended with worldly success. It is the hopeful temper that predominates in gamblers, in speculators, in political dreamers, in enthusiasts of all kind. Endeavouring many years ago to dissuade a friend of mine from the roulette table, I stated all the chances which calculators sum up in favour of the table against the gamester. He answered gaily, "Why look to the dark side of the question? I never do!" And so, of course, he was ruined. I observe, in reading history and biography, that the men who have been singularly unfortunate have for the most part been singularly hopeful. This was remarkably the case with Charles I. It startles one to see in Clarendon how often he is led into his most fatal actions by a sanguine belief that fate will humour the die for him. Every day a projector lays before you some ingenious device for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, with the most sanguine expectation that the age has just arrived at the certainty that his cucumber alone can enlighten it. The late Mr. Robert Owen remained to the last as sure of converting the world to his schemes for upsetting it, as if

he had never known a disappointment. When, a short time before his death, that amiable logician, after rejecting all the evidences of nature and all the arguments of sages in support of the soul's immortality, accepted that creed on the authority of a mahogany table, the spirit of one of George IV.'s portly brothers, evidently wishing to secure so illustrious a convert, took care to rap out "Yes" when Mr. Owen asked if he should bring his plans before Parliament; and to sustain his new faith in a heaven, by promising him that within a year his old hope of reforming the earth should be realised. Had his Royal Highness told him that he could never square the circle of life by a social parallelogram, I greatly fear that Mr. Owen would have remained materialist, and declared table-rapping to be a glaring imposture.

In my recollections of school and college, I remember that, as between two youths of equal ability and ambition, the odds of success in rivalry were always in favour of the one least sanguinely confident of succeeding. And obviously, for this reason: He who distrusts the security of chance, takes more pains to effect the safety which results from labour. To find what you seek in the road of life, the best proverb of all is that which says, "Leave no stone unturned."

As all men, however, have in their natures a certain degree of hope, so he is the wisest who husbands it with the most care. When you are engaged in any undertaking in which success depends partly on skill, partly on luck, always presuppose that the luck may go against you, for that presupposition redoubles all your efforts to obtain the advantages that belong to skill. Hope nothing from luck, and the probability is

that you will be so prepared, forewarned, and forearmed, that all shallow observers will call you lucky.

At whist, a game into which, of all games needing great skill, perhaps luck enters most, indifferent players, or even good players who have drunk too much wine, will back some run of luck upon system, and are sure to lose at the year's end. The most winning player I ever knew was a good but not a first-rate player, and, playing small stakes, though always the same stakes, he made a very handsome yearly income. He took up whist as a profession instead of the bar, saying ingenuously: "At the bar, if I devoted myself to it, I think I could make the same yearly sum with pains, which at whist I make with pleasure. I prefer pleasure to pain when the reward is equal, and I choose whist." Well, this gentleman made it a rule never to bet, even though his partner were a B. or a C. (the two finest players in England now living since the empire of India has lost us General A.), and his adversaries any Y. Z. at the foot of the alphabet. "For," said he, "in betting on games and rubbers, chance gets an advantage over the odds in favour of skill. My object is to win at the year's end, and the player who wins at the year's end is not the man who has won the most games and rubbers, but the man who in winning has made the greatest number of points, and who in losing has lost the fewest. Now if I, playing for, say, 10s. a point, with B. or C. for my partner, take a £5 bet on the rubber, X. and Y. may have four by honours twice running; and grant that I save two points in the rubber by skill, losing six points instead of eight points, still I have the bet of £5 to pay all the same: the points are saved by the skill of the

playing, but the rubbers are lost by the chance of the cards."

Adhering to this rule, abridging the chances of the cards, concentrating his thoughts on the chances in favour of skill, this whist-player, steady and safe, but without any of those inspirations which distinguish the first-rate from the second-rate player, made, I say, regularly a handsome income out of whist; and I do not believe that any first-rate whist-player who takes bets can say the same, no matter what stakes he plays.

In life as in whist: Hope nothing from the way cards may be dealt to you. Play the cards, whatever they be, to the best of your skill.

But unhappily, life is not like the whist-table; you have it not at your option whether to cut in or not; cut in and play your hand you must. Now, talking of proverbs, "What must be must." It is one thing to be the braggadocio of hope, and it is another thing to be the craven of fear. A good general, before fighting a battle in which he cannot choose his ground — to which he is compelled, will he, nill he — makes all the provisions left in his power, and then, since "what must be must," never reveals to his soldiers any fear of the issue. Before it comes to the fight, it is mapping and planning. When the fight begins, it is "Forwards, and St. George!"

An old poet, Lord Brook, has two striking lines, which I will quote, and then qualify —

*"For power is proud till it look down on fear,
Though only safe by ever looking there."*

No! not safe by *ever* looking there, but by looking there — at the right moment.

Before you commence anything, provide as if all hope were against you. When you must set about it, act as if there were not such a thing as fear. When you have taken all precautions as to skill in the circumstances against which you can provide, dismiss from consideration all circumstances dependent on luck which you cannot control. When you can't choose your ground, it is "Forwards, and St. George!" But look for no help from St. George unless you have taken the same pains he did in training his horse and his dogs before he fought with the dragon. In short, hope warps judgment in council, but quickens energy in action.

There is a quality in man often mistaken for a hopeful temperament, though in fact it is the normal acquisition of that experience which is hope's sternest corrective — the quality of self-confidence.

As we advance in years, hope diminishes and self-confidence increases. Trials have taught us what we can do, and trained us to calculate with serene accuracy on the probable results. Hope, which has so much to do with gaming, has nothing to do with arithmetic. And as we live on, we find that for all which really belongs to the insurance against loss, we had better consult the actuary than stake against the croupier.

"Fortune," saith a fine Latin proverb, "lends much at interest, but gives a fee-simple to none." According to the security you offer to her, Fortune makes her loans easy or ruinous.

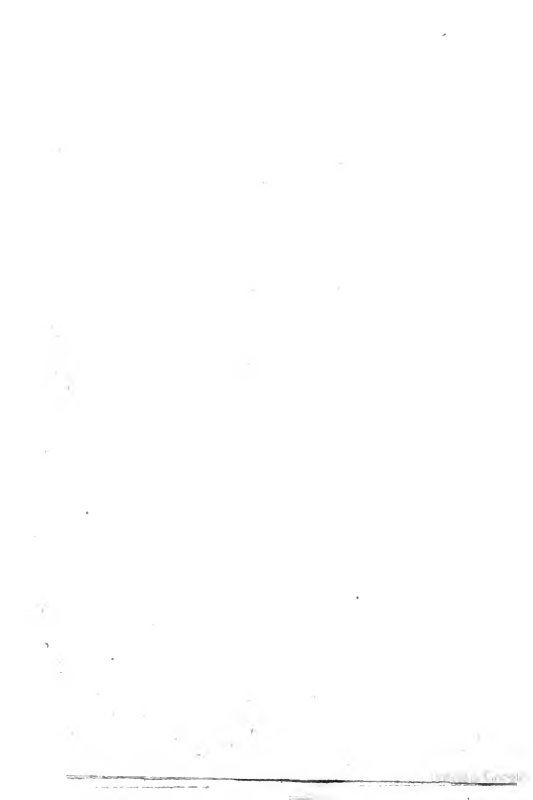
Self-confidence is not hope; it is the self-judgment of your own internal forces, in their relation to the world without, which results from the failure of many

hopes, and the non-realisation of many fears. For the two classes of things that most rarely happen to us, are the things we hoped for and the things we dreaded. But there is one form of hope which is never unwise, and which certainly does not diminish with the increase of knowledge. In that form it changes its name, and we call it patience. "Patience," says Vauvenargues, "is only hope prolonged." It is that kind of hope which belongs to the highest order of mind, and is so essential to the enterprises of genius, that Buffon calls genius itself "a long patience" — as Helvetius calls it "a sustained attention." Patience, indeed, is the soul of speculation, "and the scope of all speculation is the performance of some action or thing to be done."* This is the true form of Hope that remained at the bottom of Pandora's Box; the more restless images or simulacra of the consolatory sustainer must have flown away among the earliest pinions that dispersed into air at the opening of the lid.

* Hobbes.

ESSAY XVI.

THE ORGAN OF WEIGHT



THE ORGAN OF WEIGHT.

I BELIEVE that phrenologists are generally agreed in allotting to the frontal sinus an organ which they call the organ of weight, asserting that where this organ is largely developed, the individual has a special faculty in estimating not only the ponderabilities of sacks of grain and bars of iron, but the probable results of any course of action on which the pressure of circumstance rivets his more immediate attention.

Now, upon the truth of Phrenology I hazard no opinion; it is one of those vexed questions in which, not being convinced by the arguments of either party, I am contented to observe, with the Silent Gentleman in the 'Spectator,' "that there is a great deal to be said upon both sides."

But putting wholly out of consideration all reference to craniological development, and leaving anatomists to dispute whether or not there be any such organ of weight in the frontal sinus, I venture to borrow from the phrenologists their technical term, and designate as the "organ of weight" that peculiar mental faculty of weighing the relative consequences of things *immediately* placed before them, which in some men is so saliently developed, in other men so notably deficient.

In fact, I know of no other form of words in which I can so accurately define the quality of mind of which

I am about to treat. This organ of weight is distinct from what can properly be called prudence; for prudence necessitates a degree of foresight extending far beyond the immediate consequences of things immediately present. The prudent man declines to pursue such and such courses because he foresees that they will lead him astray, or that he shall have to retrace his steps. But this organ of weight is often found most conspicuous in those who have no pretensions of foresight; they weigh only what is close before them. Hence I have noticed that such men are liable to abrupt changes of conduct, and in public life are more exposed than many politicians less conscientious to the charge of deceiving their followers and betraying their cause. They advance, as it were, mechanically along the track of ideas to which they have been accustomed, regarding as impracticable theorists those who extend their survey of the road; and when at last they come to a place where the consequences foretold by others, and disregarded by themselves as too remote to be brought into their scales, become tangibly present, and the question is not, "What shall we do by-and-by?" but, "What is to be done now?" — then they cry, "*This is serious! this has become a practical substance!* — we must weigh it well!" And weighing it well, they often decide, with an abruptness which takes the world by surprise, that what before they had declared was too light to consider, is now too heavy to bear. In short, and without metaphor, they do exactly that, as the only prudent thing to do, which they had assured their confiding friends was the last thing that prudent men should contemplate doing.

If, then, this organ of weight cannot be correctly

described by the word Prudence, neither is it to be expressed by the name more commonly assigned to it — viz., Judgment. It is indeed a part of judgment, but only a part of it: for judgment, in the full sense of that rare and admirable quality, consists in a justness of vision which comprehends a wide survey of many things near and distant, in order to ascertain the proportionate size of each thing within its scope, be it near, be it distant. Judgment comprehends measurement as well as weight; and though it does not indeed absolutely need the prevision essential to that prudence which the ancients esteemed the associate and counsellor of the diviner orders of wisdom, according to their famous proverb, that “No deity is present where Prudence is absent,” still judgment has a logic which links circumstance to circumstance, cause to effect — examines fully the grounds on which it forms its opinions, and observes each new fact which varies the value of evidence it had hitherto received. Hence, the man of judgment *par excellence*, when he modifies or changes any opinion that he had deliberately formed and openly professed, does so not with startling suddenness, but, gradually connecting link by link the reasons which induce him to reverse his former conclusions, prepares the minds of others for the final announcement of the change which has been at work within his own; so that he does not appear the advocate who betrays the cause of the client whose suit he had undertaken, but the judge impartially summing up, according to the facts which he does not warp, and the laws which he cannot depart from. I think, for instance, this may be said of Mr. Pitt, who, whether he relinquished as impracticable what he had previously

insisted on as judicious, or whether he denounced what he had before recommended, still so prepared the public mind for such changes in himself, that no man could accuse him of treachery, and only very inaccurate observers of fickleness. In this respect he was more happily constituted than Sir Robert Peel, who resembled him in many illustrious attributes, whether of dignified personal character, or devotion to what conscientiously appeared to his mind the interests of the State. In Sir Robert Peel the organ of causality was not proportioned to the organ of weight. Foresight no candid admirer could assign to the man, in whom candour nevertheless finds so much to admire; nor can he be said to have possessed that order of reason which so adjusts and accommodates its whole tenor of action, that what its possessor does to-day grows like a logical sequence out of what he did yesterday. Hence those startling changes of political conduct, in which, having unhesitatingly led his followers up to a certain point, he seemed, in deserting them, to abandon his former self. For remote contingencies he had no astronomer's telescope; for consequences immediately before him he had the mechanician's eye — he weighed them at a glance.

In men of this character there is generally a very strong sense of responsibility; and perhaps no public man ever possessed that ennobling sense in a finer degree than Sir Robert Peel. And the consciousness of his own responsibility became necessarily strong in proportion as it was suddenly revealed to him. In opposition, a man is not considered by the public responsible for the results that may follow the adoption of his advice. But both by the spirit of the con-

stitution and the opinion of the public, the moment the same man is transferred from opposition to office, responsibility begins. And in proportion as his influence and position in office are eminent and commanding, the responsibility increases in multifold ratio. A man who had grown into so great an authority with the nation as Sir Robert Peel, was responsible to other trustees than those of party: he was responsible to the people, who confided in him even more than party did; and the posterity to which his renown appealed would estimate him accordingly as that responsibility was discharged. Thus, in the two most memorable changes which affected his political career, the suddenness of his conversion may be traced to the wholly different aspect which the questions at issue assumed to his eyes when he had to weigh, as urgent and practical, the difficulties which had before presented themselves to his mind as remote and speculative, and when the gravity of the responsibility was transferred from others to himself.

None of the censures which Sir Robert Peel not unnaturally provoked appear to me to have been more erroneous than that which ascribed his political inconsistencies to moral timidity. Moral courage he must have possessed beyond most men, in twice deliberately resolving to excite and to brave that which, to one so sensitive, reserved, and proud, must have been the most bitter of all the calamities inflicted by party war — viz., the reproach of his own army for surrendering its standards and its staff to the enemy. What has passed for moral timidity was, in fact, an acute conscientiousness, heightened, it may be, by that strong sense of his own personal individuality which was one of his most

remarkable characteristics. It was a familiar observation in Parliament, that no public speaker ever so frequently introduced into his speeches the word "I." Egotistical, in the common — that is, in the harsh — sense of the word, he was not. I have no doubt that he had more kindly benevolence of heart than many men more demonstrative. But from his youth upwards he had been singled out for eminence above his contemporaries; and as he advanced in life and in fame he became more and more an individual power, distinct even from the principles which he represented. Many an honest temperate politician, caring little for Whig or Tory, turned to Sir Robert Peel for accurate information and safe opinion, as some nominal elector of a metropolitan district, too respectable or too apathetic ever to exercise his right of franchise, turns to the 'Times' newspaper when he wants to ascertain the funds in which a sagacious speculator should invest, or the creed which a practical politician should espouse. Sir Robert Peel was both a City Article and a Political Leader. Thus he could not fail to be impressed with a predominant consciousness of his own *Ego*; and wherever he looked on the surface of the public, that *Ego* was reflected as in a room lined with glass. The sense of personal responsibility was naturally increased with the consciousness of personal individuality. And when he pondered on duty, he asked himself not, "What is my duty to the party I lead?" but "What is the duty that I owe to myself — I, Sir Robert Peel?" But with that duty to himself he identified the duty that Sir Robert Peel, of all men living, owed to his country — "*Ego et Patria mea*." And hence, whatever might be his errors as a political adviser and chief, History will

doubtless accord him one of those favoured places in her temple on which the light falls full on the noblest aspect of the image, leaving in shadow whatever outlines would less satisfy admiring eyes.

Men who weigh only what the occasion submits to them, always more impress a practical assembly than men who enter into subtle calculations of prospective contingencies. Before a legislative assembly the question is "Ay or No" — whether a certain something shall be done that night, and not whether a certain something may come to pass that night ten years! Those debaters, therefore, who weigh the reasons that immediately press for decision seem the only practical counsellors, the only safe guides for the present, even while they are confessing that they misjudged the past, and proving that they ignore the future.

Those, too, in whom the organ of weight is large generally make good administrators. For administration, in its ordinary routine, is but carrying on the customary operations of a machinery already at work. The organ of weight is indeed an invaluable faculty in what is called practical life. It is usually deficient in fervent reformers, eager innovators, enthusiasts of every kind, who, looking forward, often with accurate vision, to distant objects, lose sight altogether of the obstacles an inch before their eyes. It is as notably absent in a Garibaldi as it is largely developed in a Cavour. This organ is more generally wanting or inactive in women than in men. We see many women remarkable for discretion, and even for prevision, who nevertheless seem to lose their heads when they have to ponder on what must be immediately done. They are discreet, for they avoid difficulties as much as fate will permit;

they are far-seeing, for they will predicate correctly, even in passion, what will be the results of a course to which they are urged or allured. But when Fate, despite their discretion, surprises them by a difficulty, or when that which they foresaw at a distance has actually come to pass, their intellect seems paralysed, and they fly intuitively for counsel to the practical mind of a man. Although, in the course of my own experience and observation, I have seldom found the special faculty of weighing things immediate combined with the more abstract faculty of foreseeing and calculating on things afar, yet it by no means follows that the two faculties are so antagonistic as not to be combined. Only, where combined we recognise a very grand and consummate intellect; and intellects very grand and consummate are rare phenomena.

The combination must exist to a felicitous degree in great generals; in the founders or remodellers of states; in those who master the elements of revolution and establish dynasties. In more familiar life, the organ of weight predominates in men of business and action; the organ of causality in men of speculation and letters. In truth, the act of the statesman comes long after the thought of the writer, who, recommending such and such measures as theoretically sound, leaves it to the statesman to weigh the practical difficulties with which he, and not the writer, has to deal: so that, as Burke has shown with his usual subtlety of reasoning, the same man will advocate in writing what he may not deem it wise to execute in action.

This organ of weight appears to me more generally developed in the British than in any other civilised people. And in this, I think, there is perhaps the

main difference between them and their American kinsfolk. As a general rule, English men of business look with great intentness and caution to things immediately before them; and with great indifference, often with distrustful aversion, to things at a distance. Hence their dislike to theory; hence the emphatic respect they bestow on what they call practical sense; hence too, on the whole, the English are more disinclined to political novelties than any other population endowed with so large a degree of political freedom, so that even when accepting a political novelty, they still desire to accommodate it to the political habits of reasoning to which they are accustomed; and the advocates for innovation in whom they most confide, always endeavour to show that it is *not* the innovation which it appears at first sight, but is either a return to some elementary principle in the ancient constitution, or the natural and healthful development of that constitution itself. The English are mostly contented with seeking immediate remedies for immediate evils, and thus, from the dislike of foreseeing and preparing for changes that do not forcibly press, when they do concur in a change with sufficient force of numbers to carry it, it is with the same promptitude and haste which characterised the eminent man to whom I have referred, and who was in this, as in other respects, the archetype and representative of the English middle class of mind. Our American kinsfolk, on the other hand, to use their own phrase, are "a go-ahead" population. They look at distant objects with a more sanguine and eager ken than we of the Old World are disposed to do; they do not weigh the pros and cons which ought first to be placed in the

balance. And hence, perhaps, of all populations so intelligent, of which the history of the world contains a record, the Americans of the Great Republic have been in theory the boldest democrats, and in practice the most inveterate anti-reformers. There is not an absolute monarchy in Europe which has not been, within the last twenty years, a more practical reformer than the North American Republic; meaning by the word reformer, the corrector of the evils that grow out of a system of government which it is not intended to revolutionise. How many intelligent North Americans foresaw, long years ago, that the South would take its opportunity to separate from the North; and yet, when the South did separate, there does not seem to have been a North American statesman who could weigh the circumstances he had so long anticipated. And all the while the empire which the Americans already possessed was imperilled from visible causes, and none more visible than these — 1st, That its extent was already too vast for unity of interest; and, 2dly, That its government was too weak for unity of purpose, — the American citizens, fondly colonising Futurity, proclaimed, in every crisis of popular excitement, the Monroe doctrine, that the whole continent of America — the whole fourth-quarter of the globe — was the destined appanage of their Republic One and Indivisible.

Again, how common, within the last twenty years, has been the lament of intelligent Americans, that, by the working of their constitution, the highest order of citizens, whether in character, property, birth, or intellect, was eliminated from the action of public life. In how many pamphlets, lectures, orations, did not

reflective Americans mournfully foresee and solemnly foretell that, whenever the commonwealth should be really subjected to a critical danger, needing all its highest intellect to cope with and conquer, the incapable men would be thrown uppermost; yet for that evil, so long foreseen, not one practical remedy, even by those who foresaw it, was even suggested. Year after year, American thinkers have sent forth oracular warnings of the certain results of the jobbing and corruption which prevailed in all official departments, but never did the legislature enforce a remedy. In the struggle between North and South which wages while I write, all these anticipated evils are glaring, are prominent, in that great section of the people which maintains the principle of the Union — incapable generals, corrupt departments, jobbing everywhere — and not a single practical reform is suggested by a single statesman! Compare Russia and Austria with North America; to the two former States the ordeal of war made at once manifest their defects, and those defects they have ever since been labouring to reform. But will North America reform her defects when her war is over? As yet there is no sign of it. The main defect may be summed up very briefly — it is the prevalence of numbers over intellect and character; and until that balance can be made more even, North America will lack the organ of weight which is the essential faculty of the practical reformer. Monarchies, whether absolute or constitutional; republics, whether constitutional or democratical, engender the diseases peculiar to their own system, and their duration can only consist in calling forth the noblest conservative principle of each several system to the subjugation of the principles at

work to destroy it. It is perfectly clear that the noblest conservative principle in any State must be intellect accompanied with integrity. It is said by a great writer of the last century, that "honour is the principle of monarchies, virtue of republics;" and certainly a monarchy in which honour is effeminately ignored, is, whatever its wealth, as rotten as was the monarchy of Lydia; and a republic in which virtue is cynically depressed, is, whatever its freedom, as ripe for an ignoble grave as was the democracy of Corcyra.

For myself, I own frankly I have no prejudice against republics. In those countries in which there cannot exist what is commonly called aristocracy, but what I prefer to call a class of gentlemen, who, though they may have no hereditary titles or privileges, still constitute an order in the body politic, with leisure sufficient for high mental cultivation, with property sufficient for independence from mercenary calculations and sordid callings, with a root in the soil sufficient for a passionate resolve to defend its birthright of liberty, whether from foreigner, court, or mob, there must sooner or later be either an absolute rule, with all its military splendours and civil centralism of iron will, or a popular republic, with all its trading energies, and its wear and tear of passionate life. Were I the native of a land that presented to me only the option between these two, I think I should prefer the last. I would rather have been an Athenian even in the time of Demosthenes, than a Macedonian even in the time of Philip. And if I have no prejudice against republics, certainly I can have none against the Republic of America. Considering that men now living have seen its birth, who of the Old World can wonder at

the pride with which its citizens regard it? What other State in history ever rose, within a period measured by the life of a single man, into so great a power amongst the nations? On equal terms it has met the mightiest monarchies; no slow growth of progressive ages, it came into the world like America herself, a discovery which altered our knowledge of the globe, and dated the birth of a new destiny in the chronicle of the human race. Blind indeed the statesman who imagines its future darkened by the calamities it now undergoes. Divide the vast area of the land as fate may decide, be there in republican America as many independent sovereign States as in monarchical Europe, still the future of America, from the date of that disruption, must be as potent on the world as has been the past of Europe, whether disrupted by the fall of Rome or by the death of Charlemagne. Enough of pride for me, as an Englishman, to know that whatever State in that large section of the globe may best represent the dignity and progress of human thought, shall have had its fathers in Englishmen, and shall utter its edicts in the English tongue. I! a prejudice against Americans as Americans! — enough answer to that charge for me and my countrymen, that fathers have no natural prejudice against their children! It is only where Americans have represented some principle or passion utterly antagonistic to the ties of relationship, or where the faults which in them might be pardonable, and in us would be without excuse, have been recommended to our adoption, and, if adopted, would have insured our ruin, that we have formed not a prejudgment to their disfavour, but an after-judgment to our own vindication. But putting all relationship be-

tween ourselves and our kinsfolk out of the question, and making ourselves dispassionate observers of all that is going on in America, as it has gone on before in Europe — viz., the political separation of States geographically divided — I consider it a puerile peddling with all the issues at stake in one of the mightiest revolutions this earth has known, to consider that the process of disintegration can terminate with the separate empire of two divisions. As each State grows populous enough, and strong enough, and rich enough, to have interests distinct from other States with which for a time it is amalgamated, such State will split itself asunder, and America will have at least as many sovereignties as Europe. That is but a question of time, and time in America moves faster than it moved in Europe a thousand years ago. The practical question as concerns the future of America is this, Which of these several States, — partly by the accident of geographical situation, and principally by the operation, whether of the forms of government or the influences resulting from the spirit and modes of thought which compose the moral atmosphere of communities, — will obtain the largest share of dignity and power? So far as geography is concerned, the question is easily answered, That which is most central as regards influence over its neighbours, or that which has the widest seaboard as regards commerce with the foreigner — that which geographically most resembles France, or that which geographically most resembles England. So far as the spirit of institutions is concerned, that which gives the fairest play to the union of educated intellect with whatever moral principle — call it honour, patriotism, public virtue — may con-

centrate the educated intellect upon the disdain of private interest in comparison with the public weal; and create a Public Opinion, which, in the more favourable sense of the word aristocracy, may aristocratise the action of democracy, and demand in those who dominate its affairs the highest types of the national probity and culture.

I return from a digression which the interest that the destinies of republican America inspire in all political inquirers may suffice to excuse; serving, as it does to illustrate the propositions out of which it has grown.

As it is always well to secure a confidential adviser in one whose intellectual bias, differing from our own, tends to supply our defects; so, in the affairs of life, he who feels that his tendency of thought is over-much towards the speculative — who, rapt in prognostics of the future, does not heed the signs of the Moment slipping under his feet — will find his safety in habitually consulting one whose tendency is towards the practical, and who determines his plans by the weather of the day, rather than by meteorological calculations of the influences that will affect the barometer ten years hence; — so, on the other hand, he who, clear-sighted for things close before his eye, has a shortness of vision for things afar, should join to himself an adviser who, commanding a wider scope, not only expands, but rectifies his calculations, — not only elevates, but assures his aims.

The very highest order of common sense necessitates genius; the very highest order of genius necessitates common sense; but between the very highest order of

either there interpose numerous degrees of genius and of common sense.

How often have I seen a man of genius over-enthusiastic or over-refining, of whom I have said, "What a masterpiece of intellect that creature would be if he were but coupled to a sober, practical, business-like adviser, whose pace his agility indeed might quicken, but whose weight would hold him back from wasting his breath in capers, and bruising his thews in stumbles!"

And, on the other hand, how often have I seen a man singularly practical, whose common sense in all urgent matters, forced suddenly upon him, won ascendancy, for the moment; over more brilliant competitors, and who yet, from the want, whether of that warmth or that foresight, that ennobling aspiration towards lofty truths, or that cordial sympathy with the hearts and hopes of mankind, which give to genius its force and its charm, disappoints and deceives us in the long-run, incompleting his uses, stinting his wisdom, stopping short of that standard of greatness to which he might otherwise have grown: And again I have said to myself, "This man could have been the first of his age if he could have been as discerning for the age as he is acute for the moment; if his strong common sense had associated itself with some vivid comrade of genius, who would have brightened the eye and quickened the pulse of his reason."

For, after all, the mind of a master of action is consummate in proportion as it comprehends the two requisites in the mind of a master of science — viz., the cautious circumspection which attaches it to the

practical, and the active imagination which, out of the practical, ascends to the theoretical. A theory is an illusion, unless it be founded on the practical. The practical is fruitless unless it culminate in theory. Weight and causality are organs that should be in harmonious development with each other, whether in action or in contemplation: Facts immediately before us, being duly weighed, and traced to their causes in the past through calculations which suffice to justify those rational speculations on the future that constitute the theories of the philosopher and form the policy of the statesman.



ESSAY XVII

THE SYMPATHETIC TEMPERAMENT.

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It does not follow, because a man relieves a misfortune, that he sympathises with the sufferer. The stoics, indeed, while they enjoined beneficence, forbade sympathy: according to them, in putting your hand into your pockets you must take care not to disturb the folds of your heart. Rochefoucauld — who certainly was not a stoic, and may rather be considered the most brilliant of the modern followers of Epicurus — appears in this respect to be in agreement with Zeno. In the portrait of himself which he has sketched with the clear broad strokes of a master's hand, he says that "he is little sensible to pity; that there is nothing he would not do for a sufferer, even to the *show* of compassion, for the wretched are such fools, that the very show of compassion does them all the good in the world. But," adds this polite philosopher, "I hold that one should be contented to *show*, and guard one's self carefully from *feeling*, pity: it is a passion good for nothing in a well-constituted mind (*au dedans d'une âme bien-faite*), which only serves to weaken the heart, and which one ought to leave to the common people, who, doing nothing by reason, have need of passion to induce them to do anything."

Certainly most of us have known in life persons who are ever ready to perform a charitable action, but

from whose lips there never falls the balm of a sympathising word. They do not even, like Rochefoucauld, simulate the pity which they do not feel. Are you ill, and cannot afford a doctor? they will pay for him; are you pining for the anodyne of a tender look? you shrink back more sick at heart than before from the chill of their hard brows.

On the other hand, there are persons whose nervous system is tremulously alive to the aspect of pain; they will give you sigh for sigh, and groan for groan; they sympathise with you sincerely for the moment: as soon as you are out of sight, they forget that you exist. Put yourself in their way, and rely upon their sympathy; when out of their way, never count upon their aid. Benevolence is not always beneficence. To wish you may be benefited is one thing; to benefit you is another. A man who is beneficent without sympathy, though he may not be a pleasant acquaintance, must be a good man. But a man who is sympathising without beneficence may be a very bad man. For there is a readiness of sympathy which comes from the impressionability of the physical system — a vibration of the nerves reacting on no chord of duty, and awakening no response in a generous impulse of the heart. And a man may not be the less profoundly wicked because he possesses an excitable nervous temperament.

Alexander Phœæus, the most ruthless of tyrants, so entered into the sorrows enacted on the stage, that a tragedy moved him to tears. It is to him that Pope alludes in his Prologue to Addison's 'Cato' —

"Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wondered why they wept."

Unfortunately, Alexander Phœæus, in spite of his

weeping, kept his "nature," which was probably not constitutionally "savage." A man of a temperament readily impressionable, if accompanied, as it generally is, with a lively fancy, brings home to himself the sorrows or the dangers which are represented to his senses, and for the moment realised by his fancy. And thus it may be from fear for himself that a tyrant may weep at the representation of sufferings which, on the stage, depicts the power of Fate over even the crowned head and the sceptred hand. Now the same nervous temperament which is effeminately susceptible to this egotistical kind of sympathy, may be very subject to fear; and fear is akin to cruelty. For fear is in the conviction of some weakness in him who feels it, compared with the power from which he apprehends an injury; and no saying is more true than that aphorism of Seneca, — "*Omnis enim ex infirmitate feritas est*" — "All cruelty springs from weakness." I think we have a striking example of these propositions in Nero, when his character is metaphysically analysed. His was the excitable, impulsive nervous organisation tremulously alive to the effects of music, poetry, the drama, *spectacle* — emotionally plastic to whatsoever influence appealed for the moment to his senses. Thus, in early youth, a cultivator of the softest arts, and no cause of suspicion and terror yet maddening his restless imagination, he was doubtless sincere when, the sentence on a criminal being brought to him to sign, he exclaimed, piteously, "*Vellem nescire literas!*" — "Would to Heaven that I had not learned to write!" But the same susceptibility to immediate influences which, when fresh from the contemplation of serene and harmless images, made him impulsively merciful,

subjugated him first to sensual pleasures, rendered monstrous in proportion as his imagination, on brooding over them, became itself diseased: and, when the whole character was unmanned by the predominance of the sensual and brute-like over the intellectual and moral elements in man, all that was noblest in manhood, in exciting the internal consciousness of his own infirmity or weakness, excited his fear; for in silently rebuking, they seemed silently to threaten him — and thus the voluptuous trifler was scared into the relentless butcher. Yet, impressionable to immediate circumstance at the last as at the first, all the compassionate softness he had once known for the sentenced criminal, whose doom he had shrunk from signing, returns to settle on himself. When the doom which had shocked his nerves to contemplate for another stands before him as his own, he weeps to behold, and his hand trembles to inflict it. Just as in his youth sympathy (being nothing more than the vividness with which he could bring home to his fancy the pain to be inflicted on another) made him forget the crime that was to be punished in pity for the criminal that was to be slain, so now he wholly lost sight of his own crimes in the anguish of contemplating his own death. And when, in forgetfulness of empire abused and in remembrance of art cultivated, he exclaimed, "What an artist in me is about to perish!"* he explained the enigma of his

* "*Qualis artifex pereo!*" *Artifex* means something more than musician, by which word it is rendered in our current translations, and even something more than artist, by which it is rendered in the text. *Artifex* means an artificer, a contriver; and I suspect that, in using the word, Nero was thinking of the hydraulic musical contrivance which had occupied his mind amidst all the terrors of the conspiracy which destroyed him — a contrivance that really seems to have been a very

own nature. Besides the tastes which his hostile historians accord to him in painting and sculpture, and a talent for poetry, which Suetonius is at some pains to vindicate from the charge of plagiarism, eighteen hundred laurel crowns had Athens bestowed on him as a musician! If his career had been a musician's and not an emperor's, he might indeed have been a voluptuary: a musician not unfrequently is; — but a soft-tempered, vain, praise-seeking infant of art, studying harmony, and nervously shocked by discord; — as musicians generally are.

The great French Revolution abounds with examples more familiar of the strange mixture of sentimental tenderness with remorseless cruelty, which may be found allied in that impressionable nervous temperament as susceptible to the *rapport* of the present time as a hysterical somnambule is to the will of an electrobiologist.

Many years ago I met with a Frenchman who had been an active, if subordinate, ministrant in the Reign of Terror. In Petitot's Collection of Papers illustrative of that period, we find him warmly commended to Robespierre, as a young patriot, ready to sacrifice on the altar of his country as many hecatombs of fellow-countrymen as the Goddess of Reason might require. When I saw this ex-official of the tribunal of blood, which was in a London drawing-room, where his antecedents were not generally known, he was a very polite, grey-haired gentleman of the old school of manners, addicted, like Cardinal Richelieu and Warren Hastings, to the composition of harmless verses. I

ingenious application of science to art, which we might not have lost if Nero had been only an artificer, and not an emperor.

have seldom met with any one who more instantaneously charmed a social circle by his rapid and instinctive sympathy with the humours of all around him — gay with the gay, serious with the serious, easy with the young, caressingly respectful to the old. Fascinated by the charm of his address, a fine lady whispered to me, "This, indeed, is that exquisite French manner of which we have heard so much, and seen so little. Nothing nowadays like the polish of the old *régime*."

Marvelling at the contrast between the actions for which this amiable gentleman had been commended to Robespierre and the manners by which he might have seduced the Furies, I could not refrain, in the frankness of my temper at that earlier period of my life, from insinuating the question how a man of so delicate a refinement, and so happy a turn for innocent poems in the style of "Gentil Bernard," could ever have been led away into a participation of what I mildly termed "the excesses of the Revolution."

"Ah," quoth this velvet-pawed tiger, "*que voulez-vous?* — I always obey my heart! I sympathise with whatever goes on before me. Am I to-day with people who cry '*A bas les aristocrates!*' *ça me monte la tête! ça m'échauffe le sang!* I cry out with them, '*A bas les aristocrates!*' Am I to-morrow with people who cry '*A bas la guillotine!*' — *eh bien!* my eyes moisten; I embrace my enemies — I sob out, '*A bas la guillotine!*' Sympathy is the law of my nature. Ah, if you had known Monsieur Robespierre!"

"Hem!" said I; "that is an honour I should not have coveted if I had lived in his day. But I have hitherto supposed that Monsieur Robespierre was somewhat unsocial, reserved, frigid; was he, never-

theless, a man whose sins against his kind are to be imputed to the liveliness of his sympathies?"

"Sir, pardon me if I say that you would not have asked that question if you had studied the causes of his ascendancy, or read with due attention his speeches. How can you suppose that a man not eloquent, as compared with his contemporaries, could have mastered his audience; except by sympathising with them? When they were for blood, he sympathised with them; when they began to desire the reign of blood to cease, he sympathised also. In his desk were found David's plans of academies for infancy and asylums for age. He was just about to inaugurate the Reign of Love, when the conspiracy against him swept him down the closing abyss of the Reign of Terror. He was only a day too late in expressing his sympathy with the change in the public mind. Can you suppose that he who, though ambitious, threw up his profession rather than subscribe to the punishment of death — he whose favourite author was Jean Jacques, '*le plus aimant des hommes*' — that he had any inherent propensity to cruelty? No! Cruelty had become the spirit of the time, with which the impressionability of his nervous temperament compelled him to sympathise. And if he were a sterner exterminator than others, it was not because he was more cruel than they, but more exposed to danger. And as he identified himself with his country, so self-preservation was in his mind the rigorous duty of a patriot. Wherever you had placed him, Monsieur Robespierre would always have been the man of his day. If he had been an Englishman, sir, he would have been at the head of all the philanthropical societies — come in for

a large constituency on philanthropical principles — and been the most respectable, as he was always the most incorruptible, of public men. '*Ce pauvre M. Robespierre! comme il est méconnu!*' If he had but lived a month or two longer, he would have revived the age of gold!"

Certainly, during that excitable epoch, tenderness of sentiment and atrocity of conduct were not combined in "*ce pauvre M. Robespierre*" alone. The favourite amusement of one of the deadliest of his fellow-murderers was the *rearing of doves*. He said that the contemplation of their innocence made the charm of his existence, in consoling him for the wickedness of men. Couthon, at the commencement of the Revolution, was looked upon as the mildest creature to be found out of a pastoral. He had a *figure d'ange*, heavenly with compassionate tenderness. Even when he had attained to the height of his homicidal celebrity, he was carried to the National Assembly or the Jacobite Club (I say carried, for, though young, he had lost the use of his limbs) fondling little lapdogs, which he nestled in his bosom. An anecdote is told of one of his *confrères*, who was as fatal to men and as loving to dogs as himself, that when a distracted wife, who had pleaded to him in vain for her husband's life, in retiring from his presence, chanced to tread on his favourite spaniel's tail, he exclaimed, "Good heavens, madame! have you then no humanity?"

In these instances of tenderness for brutes we see the operation of that sympathy which, being diverted from men, still must have a vent, and lavishes itself on the inferior races, to whom its sentimental possessor shows all kindness, because from them he apprehends

no mischief. We need not, however, resort to the annals of the French Revolution for examples of this warped direction of pity or affection. Every day we see venerable spinsters who delight in the moral murder of scandal, and guillotine a reputation between every cup of tea, yet full of benignant charities to parrots, or dogs, or cats, or monkeys. Those venerable spinsters were, no doubt, once fond-hearted little girls, and, while in their teens, were as much shocked at the idea of assassinating the character of pretty women, and poisoning the honour of unsuspecting hearths, as they are now at the barbarity of pinching Fidele's delicate paw, or singeing Tabitha's inoffensive whiskers. There is, then, a kind of morbid sensibility which is not affectation nor hypocrisy, as it is often esteemed, but is as perfectly genuine as any other symptom of irritable nerves, and is wholly distinct from healthful goodness of heart; and this kind of sensibility is often united with a temperament that is impressionable, through the nerves, to the influences immediately and sensuously brought to bear on it, and is so far sympathetic; but from that very impressionability is easily subjected to morbid or even criminal misdirections; for, as Adam Smith has very well argued in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' — "Sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same as pity or compassion, is a word that may now without much impropriety be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever." And the reader will have observed that it is in that sense that I employ the word. A person thus nervously impressionable may, from the very intensity of his regard for himself, easily transport his fancy to the situation of others, so long as he can

picture himself in those situations, or so long as they appear to affect his comfort or safety. And what with the impressionability, what with the fancy, what with the self-regard, he will be peculiarly susceptible to fear, and fear will render him peculiarly prone to cruelty. Yet, with all that evinces hardness of heart, he may retain to the last a certain softness and sensibility of nerves — weep like the tyrant of Pheræa at the sorrow in a play, fondle lapdogs like Couthon — in short, while the masculine attributes of humanity seem obliterated, we shall find him human through a morbidity of sentiment which belongs to the humanity of women.

Still, though this impressionable organisation is not therefore necessarily an index of goodness, it is much more frequent in the good than in the bad. I have hitherto glanced only at its diseased conditions. In its healthful development and action it imparts to virtue that exquisite tenderness which distinguishes the archetype of beautified humanity from that artificial mechanism by which the stoic sought to fashion forth a compassionless, emotionless, ethical machine.

When the beneficent man seems to feel not only for but with the fellow-creature he benefits, enters into his heart, steals away the pride that might otherwise reject a charity, whispers hope to the grief that might otherwise despair of comfort, makes himself one with his brother man, through sympathy, before soaring aloft from him as the dispenser of favours through a principle of the duty which the prosperous owe to the afflicted — then Virtue indeed seems clad in the alluring beauty which Plato says she would take in the eyes of man, could her image be rendered visible.

Beneficence in itself is godlike; but beneficence alone is but a godlike statue — an effigies embodying a divine idea, but an effigies in marble. Add to beneficence sympathy, and the statue takes bloom and life. Nor in beneficence alone has sympathy its heavenly charm. In the equal commerce of life the benefactor is needed seldom, the sympathiser is longed for always. Be our joy but in a momentary sunbeam, be our sadness but the gloom of a passing cloud, how that sunbeam lights up the whole landscape when reflected in the sympathiser's smile, and how the cloud, when its shadow falls on the sympathiser's brow, "turns forth its silver lining on the night!" Happy, thrice happy he who has secured to his life one who feels as if living in it! And perhaps this is not an uncommon lot, except to uncommon natures. Did Shakespeare and Milton find hearts that understood the mysterious depths of their own well enough to sympathise? If so, it does not appear in their scant, yet (for such knowledge perhaps) their sufficing biographies. But Shakespeares and Miltons are as medals, by which Nature celebrates her most signal triumphs, and of which she coins no duplicates. Doubtless there are millions of excellent Browns and Smiths who may find second selves in other Browns and other Smiths. Goethe, speaking of himself, says, with that manly yet somewhat mournful self-dependence which forms one of his most impressive characteristics, "To desire that others should sympathise with us is a great folly. I never desired any such thing. I always considered man, in his individual capacity, a being to be inquired into and observed in all his peculiarities, but I certainly did not expect any sympathy." Folly

or not the desire of sympathy may be, but perhaps it is the desire strongest and most common in youthful poets. Their ideal of love is indeed, for the most part, shaped and coloured by their craving for that sympathy which they imagine the beloved one alone can give. Yet certainly Goethe, speaking as Goethe, is right. No one has a right to expect sympathy for himself as poet, as author, or artist; for, in that capacity, his life is in a world of his own, with which no other is familiar — into which no other can find a home. In that world there goes on a perpetual movement — a rapid succession of scenes and images, of incidents and events, of which he is as sole a spectator, as if to him alone were vouchsafed the vision of all that inhabit and interest the star which was ascendant at his birth, and influences the structure of his mind and the mysteries of his fate.

But no one is all poet, author, artist; every demigod of genius has also his side as man. And as man, though not as poet, author, artist, he may reasonably yearn for sympathy. Such a sympathy, so restricted, will probably not be denied to him. It has been said that the wife of Racine had so little participation in the artistic life of her spouse, that she had never even read his plays. But as Racine was tenderly attached to her, and of a nature too sensitive not to have needed some sort of sympathy in those to whom he attached himself, and as, by all accounts, his marriage was a very happy one, so it is fair to presume that the sympathy withheld from his artistic life was maintained in the familiar domestic everyday relationship of his positive existence, and that he did not ask the heart of Madame Racine to beat in unison with his

own over the growing beauties of those children whom she was not needed to bring into the world. Why ask her to shed a mother's tears over the fate of *Britannicus*, or recoil with a mother's horror from the guilt of *Phèdre*? — they were no offspring of hers. Men of action have, however, this decided advantage over men of letters and contemplation, that as their objects cannot be achieved without the association and aid of others, so they secure sympathy to their intellectual no less than to their materialistic being. The sympathy of thousands, of millions, goes with each movement of genius in a great leader of action, be he a captain in war or a counsellor in peace. For action influences the outward and immediate fortunes of men and where self-interest hangs on another, there egotism itself engenders sympathy. Doubtless there were thousands in England who felt much in common with Cromwell's secretary, where there was one who felt in common with the blind schoolmaster composing '*Paradise Lost*.'

Therefore, not only for extension of human knowledge, but for interchange of healthful emotion, I have always thought it well for the man whose main pursuit must be carried on through solitary contemplation, to force himself to some active interest in common with ordinary mortals, even though it be but in the culture of a farm. He will be more reconciled to the utter want of sympathy in the process by which the germ of a thought grows up into flower within his own secret mind, if, when he goes into the marketplace, he finds and reciprocates abundant sympathy in the effect of the weather on hay and barley.

And though the poet may not find sympathy from

others in all that pertains to himself exclusively as poet, yet he must have sympathy with others in what they think, feel, and do, or in the world of that art which, amidst the cool of its sequestered groves and its choirs of ideal beings, separates him from the crowd, he will never so soar from the earth as to strike the stars. Horace, from whom I have just been stealing the thoughts, as gypsies steal the children of the rich, exchanging their fine garments for humble rags — Horace is himself an illustration of the truth I would enforce. For what deep and lively interest in all that concerns his age, his land — what stores of knowledge gathered from practical commune with mankind animate and enrich the songs conceived amidst the solitudes of Ustica! Genius in the poet, like the nomad of Arabia, ever a wanderer, still ever makes a home where the well or the palm-tree invites it to pitch the tent. Perpetually passing out of himself and his own positive circumstantial condition of being into other hearts and into other conditions, the poet obtains his knowledge of human life by transporting his own life into the lives of others. He who would create a character must, while creating, move and breathe in his own creation — he who would express a passion must, while expressing, feel his own heart beating in the type of man which the passion individualises and incarnates; thus sympathy is to the poet the indispensable element of his knowledge. Before he has experience of the actual world of men, he establishes his inquisitive impassioned sympathy with Nature; affected by her varying aspects with vague melancholy or mysterious joy. Thus, all great poets commence with lively and sensuous impressionability

to natural objects and phenomena, though the highest order of poets, in proportion as life unfolds itself, ascend from sympathy with groves and streams to sympathy with the noblest image of the Maker — spiritual, immortal Man! and man's character and man's passions, man's place and fate in creation, move and interest their genius in maturer years, as in childhood it was moved by the whisper of winds, the tremor of leaves, the play of the glinting sunbeam, the gloom of the darkening cloud. Schiller in his exquisite poem 'Die Ideale' ('The Ideals'), speaks of a time in his grand career "*past away with the suns that gilt the path of his youth.*" "When to me," he exclaims — "when to me lived the tree, the rose; when to me sang the silver fall of the fountain; when from the echo of my life the soulless itself took feeling." But in the fuller and ampler development of his ever-progressive genius, Schiller passes onward, from the Ideals alone, to sing the 'Ideal and Life' ('Das Ideal und das Leben'); and in this poem, which constitutes the core of his last completest philosophy, the two existences unite in the crowning result of perfected art, life yielding the materials through which the Ideal accomplishes its archetypal form. From life the raw block is laboriously lifted out of the mine that imbedded it, stroke by stroke sculptured into the shape which may clothe an idea, until the final touch of the chisel leaves the thought disengaged from the matter, and the block, hewn from Nature, takes from Art both its form and its soul.

In Oratory, which has, in its essence, much that is akin to Poetry, though, as it should never depart from the practical, it differs from poetry in substance as

well as in the mode of expression — in oratory, who does not observe how much success depends on the sympathy which the orator must feel in his audience before he can extort it from them? It was thus once very truthfully and very finely said by Mr. Pitt, in answer to the complimentary charge that his eloquence deceived and led away the assembly, he addressed, "Eloquence is in the assembly, not in the speaker" — meaning thereby that the speaker is effective in proportion as he gives utterance to the thought or the feeling which prevails in the assembly.

As the sympathetic temperament lends grace and lovability to virtue, and is the normal constitution of genius; so, in the ordinary social world, it is generally found strongly evinced in those who please universally. But in them, the brilliant playmates of society, seizing and reflecting the interest which occupies the moment, — the gift, unregulated by the genius which extracts permanent uses from fleeting impressions, or undisciplined by the virtue which habitually links sympathetic impulses into the harmony of benignant conduct, may lead those who possess it into frivolities and errors, just as it has led men with nerves irritably weak and fancies morbidly restless into the gravest crimes; — sympathy being thus reduced to an over-facile impressionability to the examples and circumstances that immediately affect the sympathiser.

The elegant Alcibiades of the drawing-room, who can at once make himself at home in every circle, only obtains his social success through the quickness of his constitutional sympathy with the humours of those around him — passing from each to each with a rapidity which, to men engaged in graver thought,

seems like a mental sleight-of-hand. The ready admiration which follows this pleasing talent for society too often allures its possessor from steadfast devotion to objects for which labour is needed, and to which all returns in praise must be far more slow in coming, and far less cordially given when they do come. Hence persons singularly agreeable in all those mixed societies which combine for the purpose of holiday amusement or relaxation, do not often achieve that solid distinction which is obtained by men on whom nature has less generously bestowed the endowments of which the charmers of society are the amiable spendthrifts.

The touching and exquisitely beautiful line in which Cowley alludes to the unprofitable favour of the Muses, applies (at all events nowadays) with far more truth to the Graces —

"Where once such fairies dance no grass doth ever grow."

The darlings of the drawing-room are those whom the dispensers of official power are delighted to meet — are those of whom the most respectable members of the class that form public opinion are proud to gossip; but do they aim at anything solid — any position which official power can give, and public opinion ratify — the dullest drone who, at all events, comes out of a hive, has a better chance of obtaining credit for industry than the dazzling butterflies whom we only know as the flutterers over flowers. Precisely because we so contentedly allow a drawing-room value to the man whose sympathies with the drawing-room are more vivid than ours, we believe that out of the drawing-room he counts as zero. Hence his *amour propre* courted by the highest in directions which cost him no

trouble, rebuffed, by the highest and lowest alike, in directions which would cost him a great deal of trouble, this favourite of the Graces accommodates his ambition to those successes with which graver men do not vie, and which graver men do not envy, simply because they look on such triumphs as certain indications of failure in the objects which they covet for themselves. They continue their own course with a steadfast eye to the goal, and, looking back, cast a gracious smile on the male Atalantas who could indeed outstrip them by a bound, but who halt in the race to pick up the golden apples.

Therefore, I say to every young man at that critical age in which we are all most impressionable to immediate influences, most sympathising with fugitive emotions, "Consider within yourself what it is that you really covet! What is it that constitutes such a want, whether in your intellectual or your moral being, as you must more or less satisfy, or your whole life will be one regret? Is it for a something to be won through competition with those who, in Academe, Forum, or Mart, do the business of this world; or through a superior grace in the attitude you assume among its idlers? The one object necessitates labour — the other is best gained by ease. Alcibiades himself could not unite both. Look at Alcibiades — consider all that birth, fortune, beauty, genius gave to him; and does history record a career more incomplete, a renown more equivocal? Take your choice — do not seek to unite life's business with life's holiday. Each may have place in turn; but remember that the business leads to distinction, and the holiday away from it."

Still, I do not profess, in this or in any matter, to

demand from all varieties of mind and position, monotonous conformity to an arbitrary standard. The vast majority of men can afford few holidays after they leave school; but there are others to whom, on leaving school, all life becomes one holiday. A really fine gentleman, though he be nothing more than a fine gentleman, is a creature to be admired — he is one of the lilies of the field who toil not, neither do they spin; yet, if the corn-sheaves have their value, the lilies have their glory. A man who has no object and no ambition except to charm, is certainly a much more attractive object in creation than a man who has no object and no ambition at all, unless it be to offend. Despise a lily as you will, you would rather have in your garden a lily than a nettle.

The Italians, among whom natural grace and charm of manner are more generally diffused than among any other people with whom it has been my lot to have intercourse, possess a familiar word by which they denote a person peculiarly lovable and agreeable — “*simpatico*,” viz., a person with whom you can reciprocate sympathy. And to him whose range extends no wider than a well-bred society — in which it is no blamable ambition to wish for affection or applause — I recommend an attentive study of all that is signified in that soft Italian word.

Finally, then, the impressionable sympathetic temperament has its good or its evil in proportion to the strength or infirmity of the character in which it is found, and the healthful or morbid nature of the influences to which it is the more habitually subjected; resembling in this respect those figures in astrology which take their signification from the signs with which

they are conjoined — doubling evil if conjoined to evil, doubling good if conjoined to good.

It may, indeed, be said that sympathy exists in all minds, as Faraday has discovered that magnetism exists in all metals; but a certain temperature is required to develop the hidden property, whether in the metal or the mind.

ESSAY XVIII.

FAITH AND CHARITY: OR, THE UNION, IN PRACTICAL
LIFE, OF SINCERITY AND CONCILIATION.

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IF the New Testament were divested of its sacred character, what depths of wisdom thinkers would still discover in the spirit of its precepts! That insistence upon Faith as an all-important element of man's spiritual nature, to which some philosophers have directed their assaults, philosophers more noble and profound would then recognise as essential, not more to the religion that claims it, than to the unfolding and uplifting of all our noblest faculties and powers. For when we come to consider our intellectual organisation, we find that, for all our achievements, there is an absolute necessity of faith in something not yet actually proved by our experience, and that something involves an archetype of grandeur, or nobleness, or beauty, towards which each thought that leads on to a higher thought insensibly aspires. Before even a mechanician, proceeding step by step through the linked problems of mathematical science, can arrive at a new invention, he must have faith in a truth not yet proved; for that which has already been proved cannot be an invention. It is the same with every original poet and artist—he must have faith in a possible beauty not yet made visible on earth, before that beauty for the first time

dawns on his verse or blooms on his canvas. It is the same, perhaps yet more remarkably, with every great man of action — with the hero, the statesman, the patriot, the reformer. “*Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam.*” I may add, that no one whom that divine *afflatus* inspired ever failed to believe in it. Thus faith, which is demanded for a religion, and without which, indeed, a religion could not exist, is but the kindling of that sacred particle of fire which does not confine its light and its warmth to the altar on which it glows. And where that faith is first, as it were, pledged to the sublimest and loveliest ideals which man’s imagination can conceive — viz., the omnipresence of a Creator who permits us to call him Father, and the assurance of an immortality more confirmed by our own capacities to comprehend and aspire to it, than it would be if, without such capacities, a ghost appeared at our bedside every night to proclaim it; for would a ghost make a dog believe he was immortal? — where, I say, faith is first pledged to those beliefs which, with few exceptions, the highest orders of human intellect have embraced, it is the property of that faith, if it be not corrupted into superstition nor incensed into fanaticism, to communicate a kindred nobleness to all other ideals conceived in the quickened heart and approached by the soaring genius. Nay, even where men of considerable mental powers have entirely rejected all religious belief, and, so far as a soul and a Deity are concerned, refused to suffer a thought to escape from the leading-strings of that over-timorous Reason which, if alone consulted, would keep us babies to our grave — those men have invariably been compelled, by the instincts of their intellect, to have faith

in something else not proven, not provable, much more hard to believe than the wonders they put aside as incredible. Lucretius has faith in the fortuitous concurrence of his atoms, and Laplace in his crotchet of Nebulosity. Neither those theories, nor any theory which the mind of man can devise, could start fully into day without faith in some truths that lie yet among shadows unpierced by experience; and therefore, to all philosophy as to all fancy, to all art, to all civilisation, faith in that which, if divined by the imagination, is not among the facts to which the reason confines its scope, is the restless, productive, vivifying, indispensable principle. And there would be an unspeakable wisdom in writings, even were they not inspired, which lend to this principle of faith a definite guidance towards certain simple propositions, easily comprehended by an infant or a letterless peasant; and which, if argued against, certainly cannot be disproved, by the ablest casuists; — propositions which tend to give a sense of support and consolation under grief, hope amidst the terrors of despair, and place before the mind, in all conceivable situations, an image of ineffable patience, fortitude, self-sacrifice — which, in commanding our reverence, still enthralls our love and invites our imitation. Thus Faith, steadied and converged towards distinct objects beyond the realm of the senses, loses itself no more among the phantom shadows of the Unknown and Unconjecturable, but is left free to its worldly uses in this positive world — believing always in some truth for the morrow beyond the truth of the day, and thus advancing the gradual march of science; believing in types of beauty not yet reduced to form, and thus winning out of nature new

creations of art; believing in the utility of virtues for which there is no earthly reward — in the grandeur of duties which are not enforced by the law — in the impulse to deeds which annihilate even the care for self-preservation, and conduct to noble, and yet, perhaps, to fameless graves, and thus invigorating and recruiting the life of races by millions of crownless martyrs and unrecorded heroes. Strike from Mankind the Principle of Faith, and men would have no more history than a flock of sheep.

But it is the common perversion of faith, if left unchastised, uncounterbalanced, to embitter itself into intolerance. This is not fairly to be alleged against religion alone, as many satirical writers have done; it is the same with faith in all other varieties of form. Nay, the most intolerant men I have ever known in my life have been men of no religion whatsoever; who, having an intense faith in the sincerity and wisdom of their own irreligion, treat those who dissent from their conclusions as simpletons or impostors. "One would fancy," says Addison, with elegant irony, "that the zealots in atheism would be exempt from the single fault which seems to grow out of the imprudent fervour of religion. But so it is, that irreligion is propagated with as much fierceness and contention, wrath and indignation, as if the safety of mankind depended upon it."

In politics, what can be so intolerant as party-spirit when it runs high? But when it runs high it is sincere. Faith has entered into the conflict: the combatants have quite forgotten that the object clear to the cooler bystanders, is to put some men out of office and others into it; they have conscientiously convinced themselves

of the worthiness of their own cause, and the infamy of their opponents'. Regarded on one side, antagonists are bigots and tyrants; on the other side, antagonists are cheats or incendiaries.

Art and science have also their intolerance. Hear the orthodox physician talk of his innovating brother! No coarser libels have been written than those in scientific journals against a professor of science. In art, an artist forms his theories and his school, and has an enthusiast's faith in their indubitable superiority: the artist of a different school he regards as a Goth. One of the mildest poets I ever knew, who had nurtured his own harmless muse in the meek Helicon of Wordsworth, never could hear Lord Byron praised, nor even quoted, without transports of anger. I once nearly lost one of the dearest friends I possess, by indiscreetly observing that the delineation of passion was essential to the highest order of poets, simply because he had formed a notion, in the rectitude of which he had the strongest good faith, that perfect poetry should be perfectly passionless. I am not sure, indeed, whether there be not, nowadays, a more vehement bigotry in matters of taste than in those of opinion. For so much has been said and written about toleration as regards opinion, that in that respect the fear of not seeming enlightened preserves many from being uncharitable. But, on the contrary, so much is every day said and written which favours intolerance in matters of taste, that it seems enlightened to libel the whole mental and moral composition of the man whose taste is opposed to your own. I have known language applied to a difference of taste on the merits of a poet, a novelist, nay, even an actor, which the

Bishop of Exeter would not venture to apply to Tom Paine.

In a word, there is scarcely anything in which a man has a deep and conscientious faith, but what he is liable to be very intolerant to the man who shocks that faith by an antagonistic faith of his own. And if this general truth be more flagrantly noticeable in religious beliefs than in any other, it is not only because a man who believes in his religion holds it the most valuable of all his intellectual title-deeds, but also because a larger number of men concur in a religious belief than they do upon any other debatable point.

In the New Testament, however, Faith is not left without a softening adviser, and Charity is placed by her side — Charity, with which Intolerance is impossible. For while so impressively insisting upon faith, our Saviour not less impressively reserves the right of judgment to Himself, the Unerring and Divine; and to man, whose faculty of judging must be, like man himself, erring and human, He says imperatively, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Now, of all our offences, it is clear that that offence of which man can be the least competent judge is an offence of defective faith. For faith belongs to our innermost hearts, and not to our overt actions. And religious faith is therefore that express tribute to the only Reader of all hearts, on the value of which man can never, without arrogant presumption, set himself up as judge.

And the whole spirit and letter of the Gospel so enforce the duty of brotherly love, that the harshness with which man is disposed to regard the fellow-man whose doctrine differs from his own, has in that commandment of love a perpetual mitigator and sweetener.

When the scribe asked our Lord, "What is the First Commandment of all?" our Lord was not contented with stating the First Commandment alone — viz., that which enjoins the love of God — but emphatically added a Second Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The First Commandment includes religious faith; for who can love what he does not believe in? The Second Commandment includes all which can keep faith safe from bigotry; for what man, except a maniac, would torment and persecute *himself* for a difference of opinion from another?

It is thus that, by a benignant omniscience of the human heart in its strength and its weakness, Faith is enjoined as a habit of mind essential to all mental achievement as to all moral grandeur, while the asperities to which sincere faith, not in religion alone, but in all doctrines that the believer considers valuable, down to a dogma in politics or a canon in taste, are assuaged in him who has formed the habit of loving his neighbour as himself, and disciplining his whole conduct by the exquisite justice which grows out of the observance of that harmonising rule.

Now it is only with the worldly uses which are suggested by the divine Second Commandment — deduced from it as corollaries are from a problem, or as problems themselves are deduced from an axiom — that I have to deal in the remarks I submit to the reader on the Wisdom of Conciliation.

This wisdom, which is the one we appear the most to neglect, whether in public or private life, is nevertheless that which, where it is practised, is attended with the most auspicious results.

Take, first, the strife of parties. The men who

admit into faith no soothing element of brotherly love, are, no matter how sincere or how eloquent, the worst enemies to the party they espouse, and in critical periods of history have been the destroyers of states, and the subverters of the causes they espouse. It is with truth that the philosophical apologists for the excesses of popular revolutions have contended that timely reforms, yielded to reason, would have prevented the revolutions subsequently made in wrath. But it is a truth quite as notable, yet far less frequently insisted upon, that revolutions made in wrath do not secure their object. There is a stage in all popular movements at which to stop short is the surest victory, and from which all advance forward is certain to create reaction. Like the bad poet ridiculed by Boileau, the fanatical reformer,

*"En poursuivant Moïse au travers des deserts,
Court avec Pharaon se noyer dans les mers."*

In all contests of party there are many stages in which conciliation is obviously the wisest policy for both; and where that policy is rejected, sooner or later the conciliator appears, though in the form of a master. He conciliates the strife of parties by suppressing it. The fortunate dictator, under whatever name he may be called, is in fact always, to the bulk of the people, the representative of compromise — a power grown out of the disorders of other powers — the supremacy of which preserves each faction from the domination of its rivals, and secures to the community that repose which the leaders of the factions had refused to effect by conciliations between themselves. Thus in truth rose Augustus, Cromwell, and either Napoleon, the First and Third. In the rise of

each of these sovereign arbiters, there was, in fact, a compromise. The old system of authority was sacrificed to the passions begotten by opposition to it. The system of freedom, to which the old authority had been obnoxious, was sacrificed to the fears which its violence had created. And if, on the whole, in this compromise, the abstract principle of liberty lost more than the abstract principle of authority, it is because, in all prolonged and embittered contests between liberty and order, order is sure ultimately to get the better; for liberty is indeed the noblest luxury of states, but order is the absolute necessity of their existence.

In the more peaceful and normal contests of party, a small minority of thoughtful men, who interpose between extremes, will generally contrive to possess themselves of power. This is remarkably the case in the British Parliament. For there is a strange peculiarity in English public life — the opinions most popular on the hustings are not those which the public, in its heart, desires to see carried into effect in administration. On the one side, the greater number of representatives consists of those who profess reforms which cannot be achieved; on the other side, the greater number are those who the most strenuously denounce the changes which must inevitably take place. To judge by the temper of constituencies, a compromise would be impossible; the nation must be governed by the opinions which obtain the triumph on the hustings. But, the election once over, it is the few temperate men, whose temperance finds small favour at the hustings, who obtain the confidence of the public and the ear of Parliament.

But there is one essential to the success of moderate

councillors; they must be not less in earnest than the vehement ones. Insincerity is often excused to passion, but never to moderation. For it is allowed, with a good-natured if contemptuous indulgence, that men in a passion, often saying more than they intend, must as often unsay what they have said; and insincerity in them seems less want of truth than defect of judgment. But the moderate man is the calm man, who thinks deliberately for himself before he delivers the opinion on which others rely; and insincerity in him seems deliberate fraud. Let it be plainly understood, that to conciliate men is not to abandon principles. It is quite possible in public life, as in private, to be conciliatory and yet firm. In order to be so, it is necessary to discriminate between those things that will not admit of compromise consistently with honour to the advocate and safety to the cause, and those things that, in the perpetual flux and reflux of human affairs, belong essentially to the policy of compromise — compromise being the normal necessity of free states, which would rapidly perish if the feuds they engender were wholly irreconcilable. We talk of times of transition, as if transition were the peculiarity of a time, whereas in every progressive state all times are times of transition. The statesman who cannot comprehend this truth, is always exposed to the charge either of impracticability or of treason. If he exclaims, "No compromise!" in things that admit of compromise, he must constantly find himself in the attitude either of unavailing resistance or of ignominious surrender; in either case he will not be a safe guide. A truly wise politician, espousing a cause with sincere devotion, will as sparingly as possible pledge himself against Cir-

cumstance and Time; for these are the great Powers of Mutability, which he must take into every prudent calculation if he would do the best he can for his cause. The archer who would be sure of his mark must allow for the wind. Nevertheless, in every cause there are certain elementary principles not to be abandoned, and for the ultimate benefit of which even a temporary, if a brave, defeat is better than a pusillanimous concession. Still, even in such cases, it is astonishing how much a conciliatory manner can disarm, nay sometimes convert, opponents, and preserve authority to resistance and dignity to defeat. No one overcomes the difficulties in his way by acridity and spleen. Hannibal, in spite of the legend, did *not* dissolve the Alps by vinegar. Power is so characteristically calm, that calmness in itself has the aspect of power. And forbearance implies strength. The orator who is known to have at his command all the weapons of invective, is most formidable when most courteous. We admit and admire philippics where there is a Philip to be denounced and a Demosthenes to harangue; yet, after all, even the philippics of a Demosthenes had no effect against Philip.

But it is in private life that the prudence of conciliation is most visible and most needed. We feel this every day. If we have some unpleasant dispute in which we need a negotiator, we shrink from committing our cause to a blustering irascible friend; we look out for an intermediary of conciliatory manner and temper. And if he think us in the right, we feel sure that he will not want the necessary firmness in all that is really important. He may insure us what is important by the sweetness with which he may

concede what is insignificant. The conciliatory negotiator makes the adversary ashamed of violence.

In families well ordered there is always one firm sweet temper, which controls without seeming to dictate. The Greeks represent Persuasion as crowned.

The essence of all fine breeding is in the gift of conciliation. A man who possesses every other title to our respect except that of courtesy is in danger of forfeiting them all. A rude manner renders its owner always liable to affront. He is never without dignity who avoids wounding the dignity of others.

Plantagenet Pungent is an exceedingly clever man; he has high birth, a great fortune, a character without stain. He divests himself of these attributes of command, and enters society as an epigrammatist looking round for a subject. He selects his butt, and lets fly his arrows; the bystanders laugh; but it is not a pleasurable laughter. Each man feels that his turn may come next. Plantagenet Pungent has no doubt a social reputation for caustic wit; and for that very reason all his loftier claims to consideration are ignored or grudged; and once a-week, at least, he provokes some rebuff which is heartily enjoyed by the bystanders, whether they laugh openly or in their sleeves. If without provocation you strike a drayman in a crowd, though you be a prince of the blood-royal, you put yourself on his level; and if the drayman thrash your royal highness, he will be the better man of the two.

Scaliger Blount is an eminent example of a more solid sort of obnoxious ability. He has prodigious learning and a still more prodigious memory, both of which he brings into ruthless activity by the goad of a combative disposition. He takes a cruel joy in set-

ting everybody right. Are you a bashful man, talking in friendly whispers to your next neighbour at some crowded dinner-table? Scaliger Blount is sure to overhear you misdate an event or misquote an authority. Pounce he descends on you across the table, drags your blunder into general notice, corrects it with terrible precision, and flings it back to you where you sit, blushing with shame and rage, every eye riveted on your confusion! Scaliger Blount is an universal contradictor. He spares neither age nor sex; the cloth itself has no sanctity in his eyes. He would rather contradict a bishop than any other man, except an archbishop — especially if it be on a matter of theology or church discipline. As all opinions have two sides, whatever side you take, he is sure to take the other; and his pre-eminent delight is in setting you down in your own proper department, whatever that may be. Are you an artist, and venture a remark upon colouring? beware of Scaliger Blount. He knows all about colouring that man ever wrote on it, and you are sure to hear from him, "Sir, I disagree." Are you a lawyer, and, as you think, safely laying down the law to reverential listeners? beware of Scaliger Blount; he has the laws of all times, from Confucius to Lord St. Leonards, at his fingers' ends, and woe to you when you see him knit his brows and exclaim, "I differ!" But though no one can deny the learning of this *helluo librorum*, the common-sense of the common interest unites all diners-out against conceding respect to it. Instead of saying "Learned man," one says "Insufferable savage." Nobody acknowledges as an authority him who arrogates authority over all. Each prudent host, in making up his cards for a din-

ner-party, pauses a moment at the name of Scaliger Blount, and shuffles this human cyclopædia out of the pack, muttering the damning monosyllable, "Bore."

But when Urban Frankland is in the social circle, every one recognises the enchanter. His birth and fortune are but those of a simple gentleman, yet he has an influence denied to dukes. His knowledge is extensive, but with him *literæ* are indeed *humaniores*. His natural intellect is of the highest, but it is reserved for fitting time and occasion. That which distinguishes him in society is charm, and the secret of that charm is a manly suavity. He has no pretensions to the artificial elegance which Lord Chesterfield commends to his votaries; he has no gallant compliments for the ladies, with whom he is not the less a favourite; he has a cordial laugh, but it is never heard at the expense of others. The frankness of his nature and the warmth of his heart have on various occasions in life led him into errors or difficulties which might have exposed him to much truculent attack; but, as he has been ever forbearing to the imprudences of others, so others, by a tacit consent, have been forbearing to his. Malevolence gains no hearing against him. The love that he wins for his gentler qualities, begets a reverence for his higher ones. Of all the men I ever knew, none more securely get their own way — none have so kingly an authority over those with whom they live. And I suspect the main reason to be this, that every one's self-love is so secure of a wound from him that it identifies its own protection with his pre-eminence: And yet I know no man more truthful. Indeed, it is a maxim of his, that "Where there is no candour there can be no conciliation." "Sincerity,"

says Tillotson, "is an excellent instrument for the speedy despatch of business." Certainly, as faith and charity should go together, so we should never care much for a man's mildness if we had not a thorough belief in his honour; nor accept as a mediator or peacemaker him whom we did not know to have such reverence for honour in the abstract, that he would never persuade us to dishonourable concessions, whether he were employed for or against us.

The wisdom of conciliation is visible even in literature. The writers who please us most, to whom we return the most often, are the writers who create agreeable sensations; and certainly foremost amongst agreeable sensations are those which reconcile us to life and humanity. It requires but a small comparative exertion of talent in a writer who smoothes down the natural grain of the heart, to that which is required in one who rubs it all the wrong way. Hence the universal charm of Horace; hence our delight in the kindly laugh of Cervantes, and the good-tempered smile of Le Sage; hence the enviable immortality of Addison and Goldsmith. Certainly none of these writers spare our follies or our errors; they are sufficiently frank and plain-spoken, but they do not revile and libel us. They have this character in common — they treat the reader as a friend and brother; they conciliate our sympathies even where they expose our infirmities.

In all things, from the greatest to the least, he who consults the wisdom of conciliation will find his account in it. If he covet power, there is no surer secret first to win and then to secure it; if he desire that respect which is given to dignity of character, he will find that the consideration he bestows on others is an invest-

ment which yields the largest return in consideration towards himself. As to the elements of happiness which are found in a temper that seeks peace wherever peace can be made with honour, they are too obvious to need a comment. The union of faith and charity, carried out in thought and in action, pervasive in all the various operations of mind, in all the intricate relations of life, would go far towards the completion of ideal excellence in man. All that is vouchsafed to us of intellectual grandeur, coming to us through literature, through art, through heroism, as well as through religion, from those glimpses of the unproved, and on the earth unprovable, affinity between the human and the divine which necessitate faith — all that is most exquisitely tender in our commerce with each other — all that is wisest in our practical business, while we have human hearts to deal with, suggested to us by that considerate sympathy with human kind which embraces the loving charities of life. Among the Greeks, the Charities were synonymous with the Graces. Admitted into the heathen religion, their task was to bind and unite; their attribute was the zone, without which even love lacked the power to charm. "Without the Graces," sings Pindar, "the gods do not move either in the chorus or the banquet; they are placed near Apollo." Prescribed to us by a gentler creed than the heathen's, they retain their mission as they retain their name. It is but a mock Charity which rejects the zone. Wherever the true and heaven-born harmoniser steals into the midst of discord, it not only appeases and soothes as Charity — it beautifies, commands, and subjugates as Grace.

ESSAY XIX.

UPON THE EFFICACY OF PRAISE.

(IN SUPPLEMENT TO THE PRECEDING ESSAY.)

UPON THE EFFICACY OF PRAISE.

(IN SUPPLEMENT TO THE PRECEDING ESSAY.)

No one can deny that animals in general, and men in particular, are keenly susceptible to praise. Nor is it a less commonplace truism, that the desire of approbation, is at the root of those actions to which the interest of the societies they are held to benefit or adorn has conceded the character of virtue, and sought to stimulate by the promise of renown.

Yet, in our private intercourse with our fellows, there is no instrument of power over their affections or their conduct which we employ with so grudging a parsimony, as that which is the most pleasing and efficacious of all. We are much more inclined to resort to its contrary, and, niggards of praise, are prodigals of censure.

For my own part, I think that, as a word of praise warms the heart towards him who bestows it, and insensibly trains him who receives it to strive after what is praiseworthy, and as our lesser faults may be thus gently corrected by disciplining some counter-merits to stronger and steadier efforts to outgrow them, — so it is, on the whole, not more pleasant than wise to keep any large expenditure of scolding for great occasions, and carry about with us, for the common interchange of social life, the *argent de poche* of ready praise.

Scolding begets fear; praise nourishes love; and, not only are human hearts, as a general rule, more easily governed by love than by fear, but fear often leads less to the correction of faults and the struggle for merits, than towards the cunning concealment of the one and the sullen discouragement of the other. But let me be understood. By praise I do not mean flattery: I mean nothing insincere. Insincerity alienates love, and rots away authority. Praise is worth nothing if it be not founded on truth. But as no one within the pale of the laws lives habitually with miscreants in whom there is nothing to praise and everything to censure, — so the persons with whom a man tolerably honest is socially conversant must have some good points, whatever be the number of their bad ones. And it is by appealing to and strengthening whatsoever is good in them, that you may gradually stimulate and train, for the cure of what is evil, that tendency of nature which, in mind as in body, seeks to rid itself of ailments pernicious to its health in proportion as its nobler resources are called forth, and its normal functions are righted by being invigorated.

A certain man of learning and genius with whom I am acquainted, being frustrated in the hope of a distinguished career by a disease which compelled his physician to interdict all severer taskwork of the brain, centred the ambition denied to himself in his only son, whom he educated at home. To him, brilliant and quick, this boy seemed the most stolid of dunces. A friend to whom he complained of the filial stupidity which destroyed his last earthly hope, and embittered the sole occupation which sustained his interest in the world, said to him, "Let the boy stay with me for a

week, and at the end of that time I will tell you what can be done with him." The father consented. When the week was over the friend came to him and said, "Courage! your boy has one faculty, in the natural strength of which he excels both you and myself. It is true that he can only learn a very little at a time, and that with a slowness and difficulty which must be tenderly consulted. But the very slowness and difficulty with which he acquires an idea, impresses that idea lastingly on his mind, unless you confuse and efface it by sending another idea to unsettle it before it be fixed. If, when he bring you his exercise of six lines, blurred and bungled, you cry 'Blockhead!' and give him a box on the ear, certainly you give him something to remember which is not in his lesson — you give him a box on the ear! Place before him one idea at a time — associate it with pleasure, not pain; he will keep that one idea firmly, and that one idea will lead on to another. In a word, never scold him for the slowness of his apprehension; praise him cordially for the tenaciousness of his memory. Instead of six lines and blame, give him one line and praise." The father mused. "Now you mention it," said he, "the boy has a good memory, though not in his lessons. He is never at fault in a date if it be not in his 'History;' and never forgets a place if it be not in his Latin grammar."

"And what is more," said the friend, "do you not find that, while he cannot learn by heart any abstract maxims of right and wrong which you extract from the 'Spectator' or 'Blair's Sermons,' he is as honest as if he had digested a whole library of Essays and Sermons? You leave your shillings loose on your

table, ready to his hand, if he wish to buy a kite or a trap-bat; but he never takes one, does he?" "Certainly not — it is bad enough that he should be a dunce; Heaven forbid that he should be a thief!"

"Well, then, the boy has acquired for himself an idea of scrupulous honour — even under temptation; that idea came to him insensibly, and without being confused by other ideas of pain — came to him partly through the silent influences of your own living example, of your own careless talk when you are not teaching, and partly from the unconscious sentiment of pride and pleasure in knowing that he is implicitly trusted. Now, do you not think that, with the gifts of a tenacious memory and with a strong sense of the point of honour, you should as little fear that your boy will remain a dunce as that he will become a thief? Lead him upward to learning so gradually, that you do not create the necessities for blame which are stumbling-blocks in his way. You create those necessities if you ask him to do what you know he cannot do. Quick and brilliant like yourself you cannot make him, but you can easily make him solid and judicious. Look round the world; for one man who wins high place in it through quickness and brilliancy, — do you not count twenty men who have achieved positions more enviable through solidity and judgment? Now, let me call in your boy; you shall hear him repeat a fable which he has learned by heart in less time than he could learn two lines of the '*Propria quæ maribus*,' and you will at once, when you hear him, divine the reason why." The boy is called in. He begins, at first hesitatingly and shyly, to repeat the fable of 'The Hare and the Tortoise.' But scarcely has he got

through three lines before the friend cries out, "Capital! well remembered;" the boy's face begins to brighten — his voice gets more animated — the friend shows the liveliest interest in the story, and especially in the success of the tortoise, and at the close exclaims, "Boy, if I had your memory, I would master all that is worth the remembering. Think, as long as you live, of the hare and the tortoise, and — let the hare jeer, the tortoise will win the race."

"I don't flatter him, you see," whispered the friend to the father. "I don't tell him that he is the hare — I tell him frankly that he is the tortoise, and can't afford to lose an inch of the way. (*Aloud*) — And now, my boy, if we are to beat the hare, we must get through the '*Propria quæ maribus*,' but we must get through it, like the tortoise, inch by inch: your father will not set you more than one line at a time, and will give you your own time to learn it; and as I know that a more honest honourable boy does not exist, so we trust to you to say when you find that one line is too little — that the pain of learning more is not equal to the pleasure of getting on and catching up the hare; and by the end of a month we shall have you asking to learn a dozen lines. Meanwhile, fasten your whole mind upon one line."

The boy smiled; the father saw the smile, and embraced him. The hint was adopted and acted upon — and though, certainly, the boy never ripened into a wit nor a poet, he took honours at the University, and now promises to become one of the safest and soundest consulting lawyers at the Chancery bar. May his father, who still lives, see his son on the road to the Woolsack!

It is true that in great public schools this study of individuals is scarcely possible; the schoolmaster cannot be expected to suit and humour his system so as to fit into each boy's peculiar idiosyncrasy. He has to deal with large masses by uniform discipline and routine. But in large masses the broad elements of human nature are still more conspicuously active than they are in individuals. Sentiments weak or inert in the one breast, are strong and prevalent in numbers. And if it be true that susceptibility to praise is common to human beings, susceptibility to praise will be more vividly the attribute of a multitude than it will be of any individual chosen at random. Therefore, the more the agency of praise is admitted into large schools, the higher the level of aspiration and performance will become. It is noticeable that in any miscellaneous assemblage the moral features in common will have much more parity than the mental. Superior abilities are necessarily rare in a school as in the world, and (so far as display of intellect is concerned) superior abilities alone can attract the preceptor's praise. For he does not, in fact, praise eminent talent who accords an equal praise to mediocrity. But there is some lamentable fault in the whole tuition of the school if there be not a general sentiment among the pupils, favourable to integrity, honour, and truth, shared alike by the dull boys and the clever — that is (to repeat my proposition), parity in the moral, though disparity in the intellectual, attributes. And here, the more the tone of the master sustains that prevailing sentiment of honour by a generous trust in the character of his whole school, the more he will be likely to attain the cardinal end of all wholesale education — viz., the training and develop-

ment of honourable and truthful men. For the best kind of praise either to man or boy is that which is implied in a liberal confidence. A head-master under whom one of our public schools rose into rapid celebrity, acted on this theory with the happiest results. There was a compliment encouraging to his whole school in his answer to some boy, who, telling him a story the veracity of which might have been deemed doubtful by a suspicious pedagogue, said, "I hope you believe me, sir?" — "Believe you! of course," replied the teacher; "the greatest of all improbabilities would be that any gentleman in this school would tell me a lie."

Now suppose the story had been a fib, and the teller of it had been punished, I do not believe that the punishment would have had the same good effect on the whole school as the answer which, in placing implicit trust in its honour, must have thrilled through the heart of every one thus brought to remember that, though a boy, he was a gentleman. Nor do I believe that the punishment would have been as permanently operative on the future right conduct of the culprit himself as the pang of remorse and shame which such an answer must have inflicted, unless he were a much meaner creature than it is in the nature of great public schools to produce. If a skilful orator desire to propitiate a hostile assembly, though it be the most unmanageable of all assemblies — an angry mob — he will certainly not begin by scolding and railing against it. Neither, always supposing him to be the master of an art, to excellence in which manly earnestness and courage are always essential, will he attempt to flatter his prejudiced auditors for any wisdom or virtue which

they are not exhibiting; if he do so, he will be saluted at once by a cry of "Gammon!" But, after all, they are men, and as such must have much in them which you can praise sincerely — with which you can establish a sympathy, a bond of agreement, if you can but persuade them to hear you. A mob is seldom carried away against you, except by an error of reason misleading into wrong directions an impulsive goodness of heart. It hates you because it has been duped into supposing that you hate the rights of humanity or the cause of freedom. You may frankly acknowledge the goodness of the impulse before you proceed to prove the direction to be wrong. I have seen a mob not indeed converted, but rendered silent, attentive, respectful, by the first few words of a candidate whom they were prepared to hoot and willing to stone, when those first few words have touched their hearts by an evident appreciation of their own commendable love for humanity and freedom.

Even in outlaws and thieves themselves, they who have undertaken the benevolent task of reforming them, bear general testimony in favour of the good effects of praise, and the comparative nullity of scolding. It is told of one of these sagacious philanthropists that, in addressing an assembly of professional appropriators of goods not their own, he said, "It is true you are thieves, but you are also men; and the sentiment of honour is so necessary to all societies of men, that — but you know the proverb, 'Honour among thieves.' It is that sentiment which I appeal to and rely upon when I ask you to abandon your present mode of life, and, by a tenth part of the same cleverness in an honest calling which you manifest in your

present calling, acquire from all men the confidence I am about to place in you. Yes, confidence! and confidence what in? — the very thing you have hitherto slighted, honesty. Here is a five-pound note. I want to have change for it. Let any one among you take the note and bring me the change. I rely on his honour." The rogues hesitated, and looked at one another in blank dismay, each, no doubt, in terrible apprehension that the honour of the corps would be disgraced by the perfidy of whatever individual should volunteer an example of honesty. At last one raggamuffin stepped forward, received the note, grinned, and vanished. The orator calmly resumed his discourse upon the pleasures and profits to be found in the exercise of that virtue which distinguishes between *meum* and *tuum*. But he found his audience inattentive, distracted, anxious, restless. Would the raggamuffin return with the change? What eternal disgrace to them all if he did not, and how could they hope that he would? The moments seemed to them hours. At length — at length their human breasts found relief in a lusty cheer. The raggamuffin had reappeared with the change. There was honour even among thieves.

Now it seems to me that, if praise be thus efficacious with rogues, it may be as well to spend a little more of it among honest men. But it is not uncommon to see philanthropists, especially of the softer sex, who so lavish the cream of human kindness on the bad that they have only the skimmed milk left for the good, and even that is generally kept till it is sour.

All men who do something tolerably well, do it better if their energies are cheered on. And if they

are doing something for you, your praise brings you back a very good interest. Some men, indeed, can do nothing good without being braced by encouragement — it is true, that is a vanity in them. But we must be very vain ourselves if the vanity of another seriously irritates our own. The humours of men are, after all, subjects more of comedy than of solemn rebuke. And vanity is a very useful humour on the stage of life. It was the habit of Sir Godfrey Kneller to say to his sitter, "Praise me, sir, praise me: how can I throw any animation into your face if you don't choose to animate me?" And laughable as the painter's desire of approbation might be, so bluntly expressed, I have no doubt that the sitter who took the hint got a much better portrait for his pains. Every actor knows how a cold house chills him, and how necessary to the full sustainment of a great part is the thunder of applause. I have heard that when the late Mr. Kean was performing in some city of the United States, he came to the manager at the end of the third act and said, "I can't go on the stage again, sir, if the Pit keeps its hands in its pockets. Such an audience would extinguish *Ætna*."

And the story saith that the manager made his appearance on the stage, and assured the audience that Mr. Kean, having been accustomed to audiences more demonstrative than was habitual to the severer intelligence of an assembly of American citizens, mistook their silent attention for disapprobation; and, in short, that if they did not applaud as Mr. Kean had been accustomed to be applauded, they could not have the gratification of seeing Mr. Kean act as he had been accustomed to act. Of course the audience — though,

no doubt, with an elated sneer at the Britisher's vanity — were too much interested in giving him fair-play to withhold any longer the loud demonstration of their pleasure when he did something to please them. As the fervour of the audience rose, so rose the genius of the actor, and the contagion of their own applause redoubled their enjoyment of the excellence it contributed to create.

Fortunately, all of us do not require loud clapping of hands or waving of white pocket-handkerchiefs. Science and letters have a self-love which would be frightened and shocked at the plaudits which invigorate the spirits of the actor and the orator. Still even science, with all its majesty, has a pain in being scolded, and a pleasure in being praised. The grand Descartes, modestest of men, who wished to live in a town where he should not be known by sight, felt so keen an anguish at the snubbings and censures his writings procured him, that he meditated the abandonment of philosophy and the abjuration of his own injured identity by a change of name. Happily for mankind, some encouraging praises came to his ears, and restored the equilibrium of his self-esteem, — vanity (if all pleasure in approbation is to be so called) reconciling him once more to the pursuit of wisdom.

But it is in the commerce of private life — in our dealings with children, servants, friends, and neighbours — that I would venture the most to recommend some softening and mitigation of that old English candour which consists in eternally telling us our faults, but having too great a horror of compliments ever to say something pleasant as to our merits.

We cannot be always giving instruction, however

preceptorial and admonitory our dispositions may be; but if we have given a harmless pleasure, it is not altogether a day lost to the wisest of us. To send a child to his bed happier, with a thanksgiving heartier, he knows not why, to the Author of all blessings, and a livelier fondness in his prayer for his parents; — to cheer the moody veteran, who deems the young have forgotten him, with a few words that show remembrance of what he has done in his generation; to comfort the dispirited struggler for fame or independence, in the moment of fall or failure, with a just commendation of the strength and courage which, if shown in the defeat of to-day, are fair auguries of success on the morrow; — all this may not be so good as a sermon. But it is not every one who has the right or capacity to preach sermons; and any one is authorised and able to do all this. As Seneca so beautifully expresses it — “*Utcunque homo est ibi beneficio locus.*”

And it seems to me that the habit of seeking rather to praise than to blame operates favourably not only on the happiness and the temper, but on the whole moral character of those who form it. It is a great corrective of envy, that most common infirmity of active intellects engaged in competitive strife, and the immediate impulse of which is always towards the disparagement of another; it is also a strong counterbalancing power to that inert cynicism which is apt to creep over men *not* engaged in competition, and which leads them to debase the level of their own humanity in the contempt with which it regards what may be good or great in those who are so engaged. In short, a predisposition to see what is best in others necessarily calls out our own more amiable qualities; and, on the

other hand, a predisposition to discover what is bad keeps in activity our meaner and more malignant.

Perhaps, however, to a very ascetic moralist I shall seem to have insisted far too strongly on whatever efficacy may be found in praising, and not painted with impartial colours the virtuous properties of reproof. Certes, a great deal may be said upon that latter and austerer theme. Instances may be quoted of little children who have been flogged out of naughtiness, and great geniuses who have been reviled into surpassing achievements. Whether the good so done has not been generally attended with some evil less traceable, is, I think, a matter of doubt. But that is a question I will not here discuss. Granting all that can be said in vindication of giving pain to another, I still say that it is better and wiser, on the whole, to cultivate the habit of giving pleasure. And I may be excused if I have somewhat exaggerated the value of praise and undervalued the precious benefits of censure, because it needs no homily to dispose us to be sharp enough towards the faults of our neighbours.

On this truth Phædrus has an apologue which may be thus paraphrased —

* "From our necks, when life's journey begins,
Two sacks Jove, the Father, suspends;
The one holds our own proper sins,
The other the sins of our friends:

The first, Man immediately throws
Out of sight, out of mind, at his back;
The last is so under his nose,
He sees every grain in the sack."

ESSAY XX.

ON SELF-CONTROL.

ON SELF-CONTROL.

"HE who desires to influence others must learn to command himself," is an old aphorism, on which, perhaps, something new may be said. In the ordinary ethics of the nursery, self-control means little more than a check upon temper. A wise restraint, no doubt; but as useful to the dissimulator as to the honest man. I do not necessarily conquer my anger because I do not show that I am angry. Anger vented often hurries towards forgiveness; anger concealed often hardens into revenge.

A hasty temper is not the only horse that runs away with the charioteer on the Road of Life. Nor is it the most dangerous, for it seldom runs away far. It gives a jerk and a shake; but it does not take the bit between its teeth, and gallop blindly on, mile after mile, in one obstinate direction towards a precipice. A hasty temper is an infirmity disagreeable to others, undignified in ourselves — a fault so well known to every man who has it, that he will at once acknowledge it to be a fault which he ought to correct. He requires, therefore, no moralising essayist to prove to him his failing, or teach him his duty. But still a hasty temper is a frank offender, and has seldom that injurious effect either on the welfare of others, or on our own natures, mental and moral, which results from

the steady purpose of one of those vices which are never seen in a passion.

In social intercourse, if his character be generous and his heart sound, a man does not often lose a true friend from a quick word. And even in the practical business of life, wherein an imperturbable temper is certainly a priceless advantage, a man of honesty and talent may still make his way without it. Nay, he may inspire a greater trust in his probity and candour, from the heat he displays against trickiness and falsehood. Indeed there have been consummate masters in the wisdom of business who had as little command of temper as if Seneca and Epictetus had never proved the command of temper to be the first business of wisdom. Richelieu strode towards his public objects with a footstep unswervingly firm, though his servants found it the easiest thing in the world to put him into a passion. Sometimes they did so on purpose, pleased to be scolded unjustly, because sure of some handsome amends. And in treating of self-control, I am contented to take that same Richelieu, the Cardinal, as an illustration of the various and expansive meaning which I give to the phrase. Richelieu did not command his temper in the sphere of his private household: he commanded it to perfection in his administration of a kingdom. He was cruel, but from policy, not from rage. Among all the victims of that policy, there was not one whose doom could be ascribed to his personal resentments. The life of no subject, and the success of no scheme, depended on the chance whether the irritable minister was in good or bad humour. If he permitted his temper free vent in his household, it was because there he was only a private individual.

There, he could indulge in the luxury of ire without disturbing the mechanism of the state. There, generous as a noble and placable as a priest, he could own himself in the wrong, and beg his servants' forgiveness, without lowering the dignity of the minister, who, when he passed his threshold, could ask no pardon from others, and acknowledge no fault in himself. It was there where his emotions were most held in restraint, — there where, before the world's audience, his mind swept by concealed in the folds of its craft, as, in Victor Hugo's great drama, 'L'Homme Rouge' passes across the stage, curtained round in his litter, a veiled symbol of obscure, inexorable, majestic fate, — it was there where the dread human being seemed to have so mastered his thoughts and his feelings, that they served but as pulleys and wheels to the bloodless machine of his will, — it was there that self-control was in truth the most feeble. And this apparent paradox brings me at once to the purpose for which my essay is written.

What is SELF? What is that many-sided Unity which is centred in the single Ego of a man's being? I do not put the question metaphysically. Heaven forbid! The problem it involves provokes the conjectures of all schools, precisely because it has received no solution from any. The reader is welcome to whatever theory he may prefer to select from metaphysical definitions, provided that he will acknowledge in the word Self the representation of an integral individual human being — the organisation of a certain fabric of flesh and blood, biassed, perhaps, originally by the attributes and peculiarities of the fabric itself — by hereditary predispositions, by nervous idiosyncrasies,

by cerebral developments, by slow or quick action of the pulse, by all in which mind takes a shape from the mould of the body; — but still a Self which, in every sane constitution, can be changed or modified from the original bias, by circumstance, by culture, by reflection, by will, by conscience, through means of the unseen inhabitant of the fabric. Not a man has ever achieved a something good or great, but will own that, before he achieved it, his mind succeeded in conquering or changing some predisposition of body.

True self-control, therefore, is the control of that entire and complex unity, the individual Self. It necessitates an accurate perception of all that is suggested by the original bias, and a power to adapt and to regulate, or to oppose and divert, every course to which that bias inclines the thought and impels the action.

For Self, left to itself, only crystallises atoms homogeneous to its original monad. A nature constitutionally proud and pitiless, intuitively seeks, in all the culture it derives from intellectual labour, to find reasons to continue proud and pitiless — to extract from the lessons of knowledge arguments by which to justify its impulse, and rules by which the impulse can be drilled into method and refined into policy.

Among the marvels of psychology, certainly not the least astounding is that facility with which the conscience, being really sincere in its desire of right, accommodates itself to the impulse which urges it to go wrong. It is thus that fanatics, whether in religion or in politics, hug as the virtue of saints and heroes the barbarity of the bigot, the baseness of the assassin. No one can suppose that Calvin did not deem that the

angels smiled approbation when he burned Servetus. No one can suppose that when Torquemada devised the Inquisition, he did not conscientiously believe that the greatest happiness of the greatest number could be best secured by selecting a few for a roast. Torquemada could have no personal interest in roasting a heretic; Torquemada did not eat him when roasted; Torquemada was not a cannibal.

Again: no one can suppose that when the German student, Sand, after long forethought, and with cool determination, murdered a writer whose lucubrations shocked his political opinions, he did not walk to the scaffold with a conscience as calm as that of the mildest young lady who ever slaughtered a wasp from her fear of its sting.

So when Armand Richelieu marched inflexibly to his public ends, the spy on his left side, the executioner on his right, Bayard could not have felt himself more free from stain and reproach. His conscience would have found in his intellect not an accusing monitor, but a flattering parasite. It would have whispered in his ear — "Great Man — Hero, nay, rather Demigod* — to destroy is thy duty, because to reconstruct is thy mission. The evils which harass the land — for which Heaven, that gave thee so dauntless a heart and so scheming a brain, has made thee responsible — result from the turbulent ambition of nobles who menace the throne thou art deputed to guard, and the licence of pestilent schisms at war with the Church

* An author dedicated a work to Richelieu. In the dedication, referring to the "Siege of Rochelle," he complimented the Cardinal with the word Hero. When the dedication was submitted to Richelieu for approval, he scratched out "Héros," and substituted "Demi-Dieu!"

of which thou art the grace and the bulwark. Pure and indefatigable patriot, undeterred by the faults of the sovereign who hates thee, by the sins of the people who would dip their hands in thy blood, thou toilest on in thy grand work serenely, compelling the elements vainly conflicting against thee into the unity of thine own firm design — unity secular, unity spiritual — one throne safe from rebels, one church free from schisms; in the peace of that unity, the land of thy birth will collect and mature and concentrate its forces, now wasted and waning, till it rise to the rank of the one state of Europe — the brain and the heart of the civilised world! No mythical Hercules thou! Complete thy magnificent labours. Purge the land of the Lion and Hydra — of the throne-shaking Baron — the church-splitting Huguenot!"

Armand Richelieu, by nature not vindictive nor mean, thus motions without remorse to the headsman, listens without shame to the spy, and, when asked on his deathbed if he forgave his enemies, replies, conscientiously ignorant of his many offences against the brotherhood between man and man, "I owe no forgiveness to enemies; I never had any except those of the State."

For human governments, the best statesman is he who carries a keen perception of the common interests of humanity into all his projects, howsoever intellectually subtle. But that policy is not for the interests of humanity which cannot be achieved without the spy and the headsman. And those projects cannot serve humanity which sanction persecution as the instrument of truth, and subject the fate of a community to the accident of a benevolent despot.

In Richelieu there was no genuine self-control, because he had made his whole self the puppet of certain fixed and tyrannical ideas. Now, in this the humblest and obscurest individual amongst us is too often but a Richelieu in miniature. Every man has in his own temperament peculiar propellers to the movement of his thoughts and the choice of his actions. Every man has his own favourite ideas rising out of his constitutional bias. At the onset of life this bias is clearly revealed to each. No youth ever leaves college but what he is perfectly aware of the leading motive-properties of his own mind. He knows whether he is disposed by temperament to be timid or rash, proud or meek, covetous of approbation or indifferent to opinion, thrifty or extravagant, stern in his justice or weak in his indulgence. It is while his step is yet on the threshold of life that man can best commence the grand task of self-control; for then he best adjusts that equilibrium of character by which he is saved from the despotism of one ruling passion or the monomania of one cherished train of ideas. Later in life our introvision is sure to be obscured — the intellect has familiarised itself to its own errors, the conscience is deafened to its own first alarms; and the more we cultivate the intellect in its favourite tracks, the more we question the conscience in its own prejudiced creed, so much the more will the intellect find skilful excuses to justify its errors, so much the more will the conscience devise ingenious replies to every doubt we submit to the casuistry of which we have made it the adept.

Nor is it our favourite vices alone that lead us into danger — noble natures are as liable to be led

astray by their favourite virtues; for it is the proverbial tendency of a virtue to fuse itself insensibly into its neighbouring vice; and, on the other hand, in noble natures, a constitutional vice is often drilled into a virtue.

But few men can attain that complete subjugation of self to the harmony of moral law, which was the aim of the Stoics. A mind so admirably balanced that each attribute of character has its just weight and no more, is rather a type of ideal perfection, than an example placed before our eyes in the actual commerce of life. I must narrow the scope of my homily, and suggest to the practical a few practical hints for the ready control of their faculties.

It seems to me that a man will best gain command over those intellectual faculties which he knows are his strongest, by cultivating the faculties that somewhat tend to counterbalance them. He in whom imagination is opulent and fervid will regulate and discipline its exercise by forcing himself to occupations or studies that require plain common sense. He who feels that the bias of his judgment or the tendency of his avocations is overmuch towards the positive and anti-poetic forms of life, will best guard against the narrowness of scope and feebleness of grasp which characterise the intellect that seeks common sense only in commonplace, by warming his faculties in the glow of imaginative genius; he should not forget that where heat enters it expands. And, indeed, the rule I thus lay down, eminent men have discovered for themselves. Men of really great imagination will be found to have generally cultivated some branch of knowledge that requires critical or severe reasoning.

Men of really great capacities for practical business will generally be found to indulge in a predilection for works of fancy. The favourite reading of poets or fictionists of high order will seldom be poetry or fiction. Poetry or fiction is to them a study, not a relaxation. It is more likely that their favourite reading will be in works called abstruse or dry — antiquities, metaphysics, subtle problems of criticism, or delicate niceties of scholarship. On the other hand, the favourite reading of celebrated lawyers is generally novels. Thus in every mind of large powers there is an unconscious struggle perpetually going on to preserve its equilibrium. The eye soon loses its justness of vision if always directed towards one object at the same distance — the soil soon exhausts its produce if you draw from it but one crop.

But it is not enough to secure counteraction for the mind in all which directs its prevailing faculties towards partial and special results; it is necessary also to acquire the power to keep differing faculties and acquirements apart and distinct on all occasions in which it would be improper to blend them. When the poet enters on the stage of real life as a practical man of business, he must be able to leave his poetry behind him; when the practical man of business enters into the domain of poetry, he must not remind us that he is an authority on the Stock Exchange. In a word, he who has real self-control has all his powers at his command, now to unite and now to separate them.

In public life this is especially requisite. A statesman is seldom profound unless he be somewhat of a scholar; an orator is seldom eloquent unless he have

familiarised himself with the world of the poets. But he will never be a statesman of commanding influence, and never an orator of lasting renown, if, in action or advice on the practical affairs of nations, he be more scholar or poet than orator or statesman. Pitt and Fox are memorable instances of the discriminating self-abnegation with which minds of masculine power can abstain from the display of riches unsuited to place and occasion.

In the Mr. Fox of St. Stephen's, the nervous reasoner from premises the broadest and most popular, there is no trace of the Mr. Fox of St. Anne's, the refining verbal critic, with an almost feminine delight in the filigree and trinkets of literature. At rural leisure, under his apple-blossoms, his predilection in scholarship is for its daintiest subtleties; his happiest remarks are on writers very little read. But place the great Tribune on the floor of the House of Commons, and not a vestige of the fine verbal critic is visible. His classical allusions are then taken from passages the most popularly known. And, indeed, it was a saying of Fox's, "That no young member should hazard in Parliament a Latin quotation not found in the Eton Grammar."

Pitt was yet more sparing than Fox in the exhibition of his scholarship, which, if less various than his rival's, was probably quite as deep. And one of the friends who knew him best said, that Pitt rigidly subdued his native faculty of *wit*, not because he did not appreciate and admire its sparkles in orators unrestrained by the responsibilities of office, but because he considered that a man in the position of First Minister impaired influence and authority by the cheers that transferred

his reputation from his rank of Minister to his renown as Wit. He was right. Grave situations are not only dignified but strengthened by that gravity of demeanour which is not the hypocrisy of the would-be wise, but the genuine token of the earnest sense of responsibility.

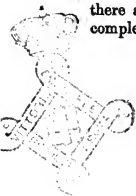
Self-control thus necessitates, first, Self-Knowledge — the consciousness and the calculation of our own resources and our own defects. Every man has his strong point — every man has his weak ones. To know both the strong point and the weak ones is the first object of the man who means to extract from himself the highest degree of usefulness with the least alloy of mischief. His next task is yet more to strengthen his strong points by counterbalancing them with weights thrown into the scale of the weak ones; for force is increased by resistance. Remedy your deficiencies, and your merits will take care of themselves. Every man has in him good and evil. His good is his valiant army, his evil is his corrupt commissariat; reform the commissariat, and the army will do its duty.

The third point in Self-control is Generalship — is Method — is that calm science in the midst of movement and passion which decides where to advance, where to retreat — what regiments shall lead the charge, what regiments shall be held back in reserve. This is the last and the grandest secret: the other two all of us may master.

The man who, but with a mind somewhat above the average (raised above the average whether by constitutional talent or laborious acquirement), has his own intellect, with all its stores, under his absolute control, — that man can pass from one state of idea

to another — from action to letters, from letters to action — without taking from one the establishment that would burden the other. It is comparatively a poor proprietor who cannot move from town to country but what he must carry with him all his servants and half his furniture. He who keeps the treasures he has inherited or saved in such compartments that he may know where to look for each at the moment it is wanted, will rarely find himself misplaced in any change of situation. It is not that his genius is versatile, but that it has the opulent attributes which are essential to successful intellect of every kind. The attributes themselves may vary in property and in degree, but the power of the SELF — of the unity which controls all at its disposal — should be in the facility with which it can separate or combine all its attributes at its will.

It is thus, in the natural world, that an ordinary chemist may accomplish marvels beyond the art of magicians of old. Each man of good understanding, who would be as a chemist to the world within himself, will be startled to discover what new agencies spring into action merely by separating the elements dormant when joined, or combining those that were wasted in air when apart. In one completed Man there are the forces of many men. Self-control is self-completion.



ESSAY XXI.

THE MODERN MISANTHROPE.



THE MODERN MISANTHROPE.

"ALL the passions," said an old writer, "are such near neighbours, that if one of them is on fire the others should send for the buckets." Thus love and hate being both passions, the one is never safe from the spark that sets the other ablaze. But contempt is passionless; it does not catch, it quenches fire. The misanthrope who professes to hate mankind has generally passed to that hate from too extravagant a love. And love for mankind is still, though unconsciously to himself, feeding hate by its own unextinguished embers. "The more a man loves his mistress," says Rochefoucauld, "the nearer he is to hate her." Possibly so, if he is jealous; but in return, the more he declares he hates her, the nearer he is to loving her again. Vehe-ment affections do not move in parallels, but in circles. As applied to them the proverb is true, "*Les extrêmes se touchent*." A man of ardent temperament who is shocked into misanthropy by instances of ingratitude and perfidy, is liable any day to be carried back into philanthropy, should unlooked-for instances of gratitude and truth start up and take him by surprise. But if an egotist, who, inheriting but a small pittance of human affection, concentrates it rigidly on himself, should deliberately school his reason into calm contempt for his species, he will retain that contempt to the last.

He looks on the world of man, with its virtues and vices, much as you, O my reader, look on an ant-hill! What to you are the virtues or vices of ants? It is this kind of masked misanthropy which we encounter in our day — the misanthropy without a vizard belongs to a ruder age.

The misanthrope of Shakespeare and Molière is a passionate savage; the misanthrope who has just kissed his hand to you is a polished gentleman. No disgust of humanity will ever make *him* fly the world. From his club-window in St. James's his smile falls on all passers-by with equal suavity and equal scorn. It may be said by verbal critics that I employ the word misanthrope incorrectly — that, according to strict interpretation, a misanthrope means not a despiser but a hater of men, and that this elegant gentleman is not, by my own showing, warm-blooded enough for hate. True, but contempt so serene and immovable is the philosophy of hate — the intellectual consummation of misanthropy. My hero would have listened with approving nod to all that Timon or Alceste could have thundered forth in detestation of his kind, and blandly rejoined, "Your truisms, *mon cher*, are as evident as that two and two make four. But you can calculate on the principle that two and two make four without shouting forth, as if you proclaimed a notable discovery, what every one you meet knows as well as yourself. Men are scoundrels — two and two make four — reckon accordingly, and don't lose your temper in keeping your accounts." My misanthrope *à la mode* never rails at vice; he takes it for granted as the elementary principle in the commerce of life. As for virtue, he regards it as a professor of science regards

witchcraft. No doubt there are many plausible stories, very creditably attested, that vouch for its existence, but the thing is not in nature. Easier to believe in a cunning imposture than an impossible fact. It is the depth and completeness of his contempt for the world that makes him take the world so pleasantly. He is deemed the man of the world *par excellence*, and the World caresses and admires its Man.

The finest gentleman of my young day, who never said to you an unkind thing nor of you a kind one — whose slightest smile was a seductive fascination — whose loudest tone was a flute-like melody — had the sweetest way possible of insinuating his scorn of the human race. The urbanity of his manners made him a pleasant acquaintance — the extent of his reading an accomplished companion. No one was more versed in those classes of literature in which Mephistopheles might have sought polite authorities in favour of his demoniacal views of philosophy. He was at home in the correspondence between cardinals and debauchees in the time of Leo X. He might have taken high honours in an examination on the memoirs illustrating the life of French *salons* in the *ancien régime*. He knew the age of Louis Quinze so well that to hear him you might suppose he was just fresh from a *petit souper* in the *Parc aux Cerfs*.

Too universally agreeable not to amuse those present at the expense of those absent, still, even in sarcasm, he never seemed to be ill-natured. As one of his associates had a louder reputation for wit than his own, so it was his modest habit to father upon that professed *diseur de bons mots* any more pointed epigram that occurred spontaneously to himself. "I wonder," said

a dandy of another dandy who was no Adonis, "why on earth — has suddenly taken to cultivate those monstrous red whiskers." "Ah," quoth my pleasant fine gentleman, "I think for my part they become his style of face very much; A — says 'that they plant out his ugliness.'" For the rest, in all graver matters, if the man he last dined with committed some act which all honest men blamed, my misanthrope evinced his gentle surprise, not at the act, but the blame — "What did you expect?" he would say, with an adorable indulgence, "he was a man — *like yourselves!*"

Sprung from one of the noblest lineages in Christendom — possessed of a fortune which he would smilingly say "was not large enough to allow him to give a shilling to any one else," but which, prudently spent on himself, amply sufficed for all the elegant wants of a man so emphatically single — this darling of fashion had every motive conceivable to an ordinary understanding not to be himself that utter rogue which he assumed every other fellow-creature to be. Nevertheless, he was too nobly consistent to his creed to suffer his example to be at variance with his doctrine; and here he had an indisputable advantage over Timon and Alceste, who had no right, when calling all men rogues, to belie their assertion by declining to be rogues themselves. His favourite amusement was whist, and in that game his skill was so consummate that he had only to play fairly in order to add to his income a sum which, already spending on himself all that he himself required, he would not have known what to do with. But, as he held all men to be cheats, he cheated on principle. It was due to the honour of his philo-

sophy to show his utter disdain of the honour which impostors preached, but which only dupes had the folly to practise. If others did not mark the aces and shuffle up the kings as he did, it was either because they were too stupid to learn how, or too cowardly to risk the chance of exposure. He was not as stupid, he was not as cowardly, as the generality of men. It became him to show his knowledge of their stupidity and his disdain of their cowardice. *Bref* — he cheated! — long with impunity: but, as Charron says, *L'homme se pique* — man cogs the dice for his own ruin. At last he was suspected, he was watched, he was detected. But the first thought of his fascinated victims was not to denounce, but to warn him — kindly letters conveying delicate hints were confidentially sent to him: he was not asked to disgorge, not exhorted to repent; let bygones be bygones; only for the future, would he, in playing with his intimate associates, good-naturedly refrain from marking the aces and shuffling up the kings?

I can well imagine the lofty smile with which the scorner of men must have read such frivolous recommendations to depart from the philosophical system adorned in vain by his genius if not enforced by his example. He who despised the opinions of sages and saints — he to be frightened into respecting the opinions of idlers at a club! — send to him an admonition from the world of honour, to respect the superstitions of card-players! as well send to Mr. Faraday an admonition from the world of spirits to respect the superstitions of table-rappers! To either philosopher there would be the same reply — “I go by the laws of nature.” In short, strong in the conscience

of his opinion, this consistent reasoner sublimely persevered in justifying his theories of misanthropy by his own resolute practice of knavery, inexcusable and unredeemed.

"What Timon thought, this god-like Cato was!"

But man, whatever his inferiority to the angels, is still not altogether a sheep. And even a sheep only submits to be sheared once a-year; to be sheared every day would irritate the mildest of lambs. Some of the fellow-mortals whom my hero caressed and plundered, took heart, and openly accused him of marking the aces and shuffling up the kings. At first his native genius suggested to him the wisdom of maintaining, in smiling silence, the contempt of opinion he had hitherto so superbly evinced. Unhappily for himself, he was induced by those who, persuaded that a man of so high a birth could never have stooped to so low a peccadillo, flattered him with the assurance of an easy triumph over his aspersers — unhappily, I say, he was induced into a departure from that system of action which he had hitherto maintained with so supreme a success. He condescended, for the first time in his life, to take other men into respect — to regard what might be thought of him by a world he despised. He brought an action for libel against his accusers. His counsel, doubtless by instruction, sought to redeem that solitary inconsistency in his client by insinuating that my lord's chosen associates were themselves the cheats, malignant conspirators against the affable hawk of quality in whom they had expected to find a facile pigeon.

The cuttle-fish blackens the water to escape from his enemies, but he does not always escape; nay, in blackening the water he betrays himself to the watchful spectators. My hero failed in his action, and quitted the court leaving behind him the bubble reputation. If I am rightly informed, Adversity, that touchstone of lofty minds, found this grand philosopher as serene as if he had spent his life in studying Epictetus. He wrapt himself, if not in virtue, at least in his scorn of it, —

"Et udo
Spernit humi defugiente penno."

He retired to the classic Tusculum of his villa in St. John's Wood. There, cheered by the faithful adherence of some elegant companions, who, if they did not believe him innocent, found him unalterably agreeable, he sipped his claret and moralised on his creed. Doubtless he believed that "the talk would soon subside," "the thing blow over." The world would miss him too much not to rally again round the sage who so justly despised it. Perhaps his belief might have been realised, but,

"Vita summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam" —

Death, the only player that no man can cheat, cut into his table, and trumped the last card of his long suit.

In the more brilliant period of this amiable manscorner's social career, once, and once only, he is said to have given way to anger. One of his associates (I say designedly associates, not friends, out of respect for his memory, since friendship is a virtue, and he therefore denied its existence) — one of his associates wrote a comedy. The comedy was acted. My hero

honoured the performance by appearing in the author's box. Leaning forward so as to be seen of all men, he joined his hands in well-bred applause of every abortive joke and grammatical solecism, till, in a critical part of the play, there occurred a popular claptrap — a something said in praise of virtue and condemnation of vice. The gallery of course responded to the claptrap, expressing noisy satisfaction at the only sentiment familiar to their comprehension which they had hitherto heard. But my archetype of modern misanthropy paused aghast, suspended

“The soft collision of applauding gloves,”

and, looking at his associate as reproachfully as Cæsar might have looked at Brutus when he sighed forth “*Et tu, Brute!*” let fall these withering words, “Why, Billy, this is betraying the Good Old Cause.” So saying, he left the box, resentful. Now, this man I call the genuine, positive, realistic Misanthrope, compared to whom Timon and Alceste are poetical make-believes!

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